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Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

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Appendix A – Differentiation

1 Introduction

1.1 Whole-School Approach

Scoil San Treasa is an inclusive school. We strive to use available resources to enable pupils with special educational needs to access, participate in and benefit from a broad range of learning experiences in our school. Our Mission Statement informs our overall approach:

"At Scoil San Treasa, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for all our pupils in a happy, safe, Christian environment. While we value high academic achievement, the social, personal and moral development of our pupils is of primary importance and we view the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation while it cherishes the best educational, cultural and religious traditions of our society. Acknowledging that their parents are the primary educators of our children, we are inspired by a shared vision of excellence and we espouse a partnership approach in its pursuit".

In Scoil San Treasa, we are mindful of how the culture, ethos and learning environment of the school demonstrates to each pupil that he/she is respected and valued and we endeavour to promote the moral, social, emotional, cultural, intellectual and physical development of all learners.

"All pupils have needs including the need to feel a sense of belonging, the need to feel safe, the need to communicate and to be communicated with and the need to be respected and valued. In meeting these needs, teachers need to view their pupils as learning not only within their classroom setting but also within the context of the ethos and culture of the school." (Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers *DES 2007)*

1.2 Enrolment of children with special educational needs:

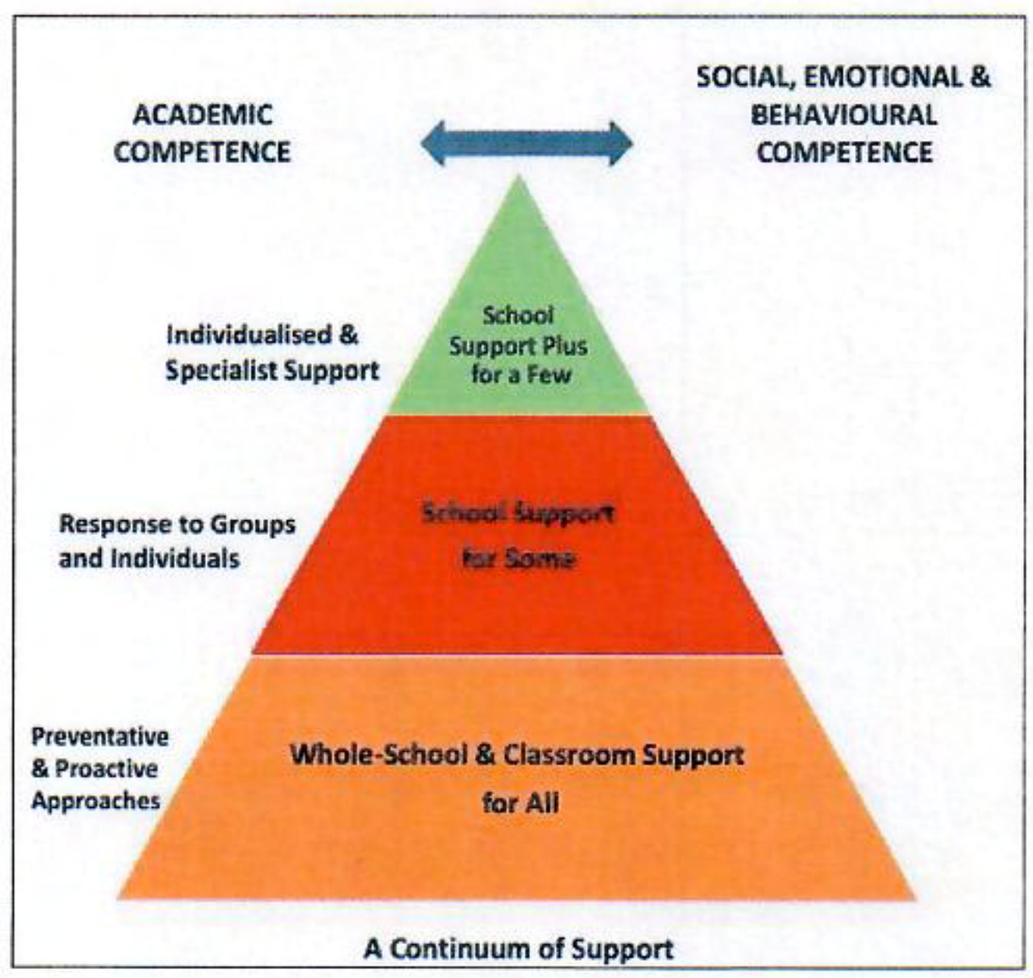
If a pupil has special educational needs (SEN), it is the responsibility of the parents to notify the school in a timely way. Please refer to our current Admission Policy in this regard. *(Note: Our Admission Policy is an important document. Accordingly, parents of all applicants are required to confirm on the admission application form that they have read the current Admission Policy prior to submitting the admission application.)*

2 Continuum of Support

2.1 A staged approach to Intervention

Scoil San Treasa adopts a staged approach to intervention, guided by the *Continuum of Support* framework. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Use of this approach helps to ensure that interventions are incremental - moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support - and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress. Pupils' educational needs include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The educational needs of most children can be met through interventions by the class teacher (Stage I). Some children will require additional support (Stage II). A small number of children will require individualised and specialist support (Stage III).

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:



2.2 Stage I - Classroom Support

The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class and over time monitors the response of pupils to the differentiated programme (See Appendix A). A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists where appropriate. Parent and pupil input into the process is sought as appropriate and as is feasible. Teacher observations over time are a valuable component of the overall process and especially at this early stage.

The class teacher should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the SEN team in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at stage II. While the class teacher is responsible for Stage I, he/she is encouraged to consult/confer with a member of the SEN team at an early point in stage I so that available resources/screening tools/expertise may be optimally drawn on for the benefit of the child. Early communication between parent and teacher around concerns regarding a child's learning or general development is an important element of the process.

2.3 Stage II - School Support

If the classroom support plan fails to achieve the desired outcome the pupil should be referred to the SEN team, with parental permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment suggests that additional support would be beneficial, this should be arranged as per available resources. The parents and the class teacher should be involved with the SEN team in drawing up the learning programme, which would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching. The SEN teacher and the class teacher should review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving additional support. Following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports. 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 III. In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases, the pupil's needs should, with parental permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case should be referred to the clinical services of the Health Services 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 III). For example, children may be referred for Speech and Language Assessment through the HSE. No such referral is made without parental approval.

2.4 Stage III - School Support Plus

Some pupils who continue to present with persistent, significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage III. The school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists, etc. The class teacher and member/s of the SEN team, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists, should then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents are consulted as part of this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary. In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their

entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the SEN team.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Board of Management

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

3.2 Principal

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

- The school principal should Implement and monitor the school's Special Educational Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher (i.e. SENCO)
- Oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- Meet with parents where appropriate regarding concerns about their child

3.3 SEN Coordinator

SEN coordinator (SENCO) should:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs

- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- Liaise with SEN Team to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- Oversee Assistive Technology applications
- Oversee applications for Special Needs Assistant support
- Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- Oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

3.4 Class Teacher

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

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils
- Create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class (See Appendix A)
- Administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy
- Meet with parents when appropriate regarding concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress. A balanced approach will inform communication approaches, bearing in mind the overall needs of all pupils.
- Gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- Open a Student Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support
- Collaborate with staff to develop School Support Plans for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus
- Meet and collaborate with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session

3.5 Special Education Teacher (SET)

The SET teacher should:

- Regularly meet with class teachers to discuss the needs of the pupils in their class
- Maintain a record of these meetings and decisions made
- Advise the class teacher, where needed, of possible interventions to meet the needs of their pupils
- Advise class teacher on procedures for availing of external special needs services
- Support the class teacher in creating a Student Support File once additional support is implemented
- Where requested by the class teacher, meet parents to discuss moving a child from classroom support to school support
- Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- Meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus
- Meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review Support Files
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- Support whole-school procedures for screening administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- Meet with parents where appropriate regarding concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress. A balanced approach will inform communication approaches, bearing in mind the overall needs of all pupils.
- Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received

3.6 Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

Refer to our school's SNA Deployment Policy – available at www.sstreasa.ie

3.7 Parents/Guardians

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

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning

- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage
- If a parent refuses supplementary teaching for his/her child, the Principal is informed. A written record of the refusal should be kept in the school.

3.8 Pupils

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

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets
- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

4 Assessment and Screening

4.1 Assessment Methods

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. We are constantly gathering information about children's overall progress. Some of this is on an informal (yet nonetheless valuable) basis such as through teacher observation and interaction and dialogue with pupils and parents. Some methods of assessment include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum. In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. Such information informs our future planning and deployment of supplementary teaching resources.

4.2 Screening and Standardised Tests

Class-specific assessment and screening procedures in Scoil San Treasa include – but are not limited to – the following tests and profiling tools:

- **Junior Infants:** When the class teacher considers that a child is not making adequate progress, a consultation takes place with parents. With parental permission, the Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (B.I.A.P.), for example, may be administered. Work samples, checklists and teacher observation (May Screening) are also used to consider the attainment/progress of pupils in Junior Infants.
- **Senior Infant Level:** The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is administered by the class teacher at end of the fifth term of schooling i.e. the end of the second term of senior infants

- **First Class:** The class teacher uses various checklists and screening measures – including the QUEST Screening (Number and Reading) in September. The Drumcondra Standardised Tests are administered in May as a screening test, i.e. the primary purpose of these tests is to identify pupils who may be at risk of difficulties so that further assessment can be carried out and their needs addressed. The outcome of the child's screening test at first class level is presented in one of the following three 'descriptors' - criterion reached; approaching criterion; criterion not reached.
- **Second to Sixth Class:** DPRT (Drumcondra Primary Reading Test), DPMT (Drumcondra Primary Mathematics Test) and DPST (Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test) are administered to all children, other than those who are exempted. Cognitive Ability Tests are used in overall assessment on a case by case basis, with pilot initiatives underway in our school to administer such tests at whole-class level to inform further planning around teaching, learning and related interventions.

5 SEN Teaching Resources in Scoil San Treasa

5.1 Allocation of Special Education Teachers (SETs) to Scoil San Treasa

In September 2017 a revised process for allocating Special Education Teachers (SETs) to primary schools came into effect, *(DES Circular 13/2017).* The allocation of Special Education Teachers is now based on a school's educational profile, comprised of two components:

1. Baseline component provided to every mainstream school to support inclusion, assistance with learning difficulties and early intervention.
2. A school educational profile component, which takes into account:
    a. The number of pupils with complex needs enrolled to the school
    b. The learning needs of pupils as evidenced by standardised test results in literacy and numeracy
    c. The social context of the school including disadvantage and gender

Special Education Teacher allocations remain in place for two years, following which, allocations are considered based on the school's revised educational profile, *"The needs of some schools may increase, while the needs of some others may decrease. Adjustments to allocations to individual schools will be required to reflect this, with some schools receiving additional allocations, and some receiving reduced allocations"* (DES Circular 07/2019).

5.2 Deployment of supplementary teaching resources

"Schools have discretion, as outlined in the guidelines, as to how they can distribute resources under this model, based on the individual needs of pupils" (DES Circular 09/2019)

- A central aspect of the revised allocation model is that additional teaching supports are deployed according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability. Children with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of supports. The school has the autonomy and flexibility to decide how best to deploy the resources they have,

- At the end of a school year and at the outset of the following school year, planning takes place at school level with a view to optimally deploying available teaching resources to addressing the needs of the school.
- All pupils in need of additional teaching support are identified. Needs around early prevention and early intervention are also considered. This includes information gleaned from teacher observation, standardised tests, diagnostic tests, professional reports (e.g. educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist), and parents.
- The caseload for supplementary teaching will be coordinated by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in consultation with the principal. This may be reviewed and adjusted in the course of the year as needs emerge and change over time.

5.3 Prioritising Students for Additional Teaching Support

The following groups may be prioritised when considering allocating additional support for children:

- Children with complex needs who access HSE Children Disability Services and/or those who have been assessed as qualifying for access to the Disability Services, but who have yet to receive services.
- Children who score at or below the 15th percentile in standardised tests.
- Pupils in senior infants and first class (in line with our focus on early prevention and intervention)
- In line with our School Improvement Plan for Literacy and Numeracy, to further support inclusion at class level, and to facilitate access to additional support for a greater number of pupils (including pupils with exceptional ability), part of our allocation of additional teaching support is specifically directed towards in-class support across the class levels.
- It is not usual practice that pupils in Junior Infants are withdrawn for supplementary teaching unless there is a clearly defined need of a complex nature.

Thereafter, a number of considerations are borne in mind regarding prioritising access to additional teaching supports, including: relative scores in standardised tests, history of accessing supplementary teaching or lack of same, acute nature of need as per staged approach, learning patterns in evidence to date.

5.4 Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

In view of the substantial international evidence that early-intervention and prevention programmes can lead to improved outcomes for pupils, Scoil San Treasa promotes a policy of early prevention and intervention in order to minimise the risk of development of learning, social and emotional difficulties and to optimally address such needs where they are manifest. Additional teaching resources are deployed in junior classes. Our current staffing allocation (teachers) allows us to direct some time to in-class support and to a significant degree in the infant classes. This reflects the Staffing Schedule for our school and also reflects the importance attached to early prevention and early intervention.

5.5 Organisation of Additional Teaching Support

- In terms of the organisation of additional support, one-to-one, group teaching, in-class support or a combination of those types of support may be decided upon by the school. The level and nature of intervention will be determined by the pupils' learning needs, the feasibility of combining pupils across various groups in response to their needs, and the available teaching resources and teaching spaces.
- Ongoing review and reflection on overall practice, interventions and outcomes inform future planning. Following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching support, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.
- Parents will be informed and permission sought where specific intervention involving withdrawal from the classroom is planned. (See section on Staged Approach above).
- Prior to the child being offered learning support intervention, it is the class teacher who will alert the parent/s to the perceived difficulty the child may be experiencing and to the concerns re progress.
- Class teacher will discuss child's progress with parents.
- Class teacher will explain why the child is being considered for further testing and/or supplementary teaching with SEN team.
- A member of the SEN team will meet with parents to discuss the child's progress and possible intervention programmes.
- Parental involvement is deemed to be of central importance in implementing any such programme. Discussion with and feedback from parents will be used to inform the IEP/IPLP process (see below).
- Parents will be kept informed of progress in the specific area/s of difficulty with respect to supplementary teaching input.
- If a parent refuses supplementary teaching for his/her child, the Principal is informed. A written record of the refusal should be kept in the school.
- A balanced approach will inform communication approaches, bearing in mind the overall needs of all pupils.
- Broadly speaking, the school year is divided into two instructional terms: September – late January; late January/early February - June. While ongoing planning and review is central to our approach to supplementary teaching, there is a particular focus on planning/review at the beginning and end of these instructional terms.
- Depending on a variety of factors including individual need, relative needs throughout the school, progress made to date and overall resources available, pupils may/may not continue to avail of supplementary teaching in following instructional term/s and/or for an entire instructional term.

6 Planning and Record Keeping

6.1 Student Support Files

The Student Support File allows the school to track the student's pathway through the Continuum of Support – right from the start of the support process, and onwards, if necessary, through to the School Support (for Some) and School Support Plus (for a Few) levels. The Student Support File keeps together all the information about the support of the student: information gathered, plans and interventions, consultations and reviews.

6.2 Support Plans

Many different types of plans can be support plans. A support plan can take the form of a general plan for support, a behavioural plan or contract, an individual learning profile, an individual educational plan, a personalised learning plan.

- **Classroom Support Plan:** When a class teacher's concerns suggest that a student has distinct and individual needs, the class teacher, in consultation with parent(s) will draw up a Classroom Support Plan which is implemented for an agreed time span.
- **School Support Plan:** In some cases, interventions at Classroom Support level are not sufficient to fully meet the student's educational needs. In such circumstances a School Support Plan may be needed. The decision to initiate a School Support Plan is usually taken as a result of the review of a Classroom Support Plan, by the class teacher in collaboration with a member of the SEN team and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- **School Support Plus Plan (Individual Education Plan):** The School Support Plus process will be initiated if, in reviewing the Support Plan, it is agreed that the student is not making adequate progress, despite purposeful efforts. This process will generally involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem solving process. It is expected that the students who are receiving support at the level of School Support Plus, will be those with greatest need. An IEP will be drawn up outlining learning targets for the child.
- **Personal Pupil Plan:** Students accessing SNA support require a Personal Pupil Plan outlining the pupil's care needs.

6.3 Record keeping:

Appropriate records are kept by class teacher and special education teacher, in line with the nature of needs as per the staged approach and school protocols. Guided by the relevant teacher, the SNA staff may assist with a communication journal, where warranted and appropriate. End-of-year pupil reports are completed by the class teacher (in consultation with the special education teacher as appropriate), while the special education teacher provides additional end-of-year 'comments and observations' re pupils at school support/school support plus level.

7 Engagement with External Agencies

7.1 NCSE, SENO, SESS

In seeking to optimally address the needs of pupils in the school, Scoil San Treasa engages with a range of external agencies. These include agencies such as NEPS (as mentioned previously), the NCSE (National Council for Special Education – the school liaises directly with the SENO – Special Educational Needs Organiser), the HSE (Health Services Executive – e.g. Speech and Language Therapists) who may in the course of their work have direct dealings with child/ren and also have professional discussions with staff, and agencies such as the Special Education Support Service (SESS)/Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST)/National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) who may provide professional development opportunities for individual teacher/s and/or whole staff.

7.2 National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

- If concern remains after intervention and additional support from the teacher and SEN team, the school may advise a consultation and/or assessment of the pupil's need through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or with another relevant external service. Such consultations/assessments are dependent on available resources and require parental permission in line with NEPS protocols and procedures at that time and protocols/procedures relating to other agencies/services as may be relevant.
- It is usual practice that the overall learning needs in our school are regularly reviewed with a view to supporting pupils' learning as best we can with resources that may be available. A number of supports are available to schools to help us to enhance the learning of children with whom we work. NEPS (the National Educational Psychological Service) is one such support.
- A generalised and routine planning meeting/consultation with NEPS (around lots of pupils, on an unnamed basis) takes place intermittently in the school, typically in the first term. Such meetings, together with concerns that may emerge or escalate in the course of the school year or over time, form a key part of the process of prioritising pupils for consideration for a formal consultation/assessment with NEPS.
- Following discussion/s between school personnel and parents regarding pupils who are prioritised, a formal consultation / consultation and assessment with NEPS may follow (subject to available resources), if parents wish to avail of this service and if they consent to same as per NEPS protocols and procedures at that time.
- As needs emerge further support/input may be sought from NEPS – in consideration of the overall needs of the school and available resources. (Access to/engagement with NEPS is dependent also on resources available at the time/over time).

7.3 Transfer to Post-primary and other Transitions:

- Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from pre- school to primary school, from primary school to post-primary school and between special and mainstream

settings. In Scoil San Treasa, we acknowledge that effective transition support and planning can enhance the educational experience of the child and help reduce potential anxiety.

- In line with our current Admission Policy, parents are required to advise the school of their child's special educational needs well in advance. (Please refer directly to our current Admission Policy).
- It is the duty of the parents of the pupil(s) with SEN to inform the post-primary school of their child's needs. Information on all children in 6th class is transferred to the relevant post-primary school using the DES transfer form/s in use at that time. In consultation with parents, this may be supplemented by a Transition Support document.
- Transition to post-primary school can be a challenging time for pupils and may necessitate additional support prior to the transition, at the point of transition and in the early stages of same. Preparation for transition to post-primary school is a feature of our SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme for all pupils in the senior cycle in Scoil San Treasa, and is reflected in pupil Support Plans IEP/IPLP targets as needs determine.

8 Professional Development for teachers/staff:

In line with available resources, Continued Professional Development (CPD) is encouraged and staff are alerted to opportunities as they arise. Sharing of best practice is actively encouraged within the school and a bank of teacher reference material is maintained and developed on an ongoing basis. A bank of key resources (e.g. professional material) is available to teachers on log-out/log-in basis in SEN rooms. Access is routinely made available to relevant digital material through our ICT network. Teachers should consult directly with SEN team re such resources.

9 Relevant Policies

9.1 Health and Safety: Special Needs Assistants are present for the duration of yard breaks along with the teachers on duty. Relevant teachers and SNAs are alerted to specific safety needs relating to pupils with SEN.
***9.2* Administration of medicine:** *(refer to Administration of Medicine school policy)*
***9.3* Code of Behaviour:** *(refer to Scoil San Treasa Code of Behaviour)*

10 Legal Framework

The policy is informed the relevant legislation regarding pupils with SEN. This legislation includes the following:

- Education Act (1998)
- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- Equal Status Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
- Equality Act (2004)
- Data Protection Acts (1988,1998 and 2003) GDPR 2018
- Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

References

- Learning Support Guidelines, (DES, 2000)
- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers (DES, NEPS, 2007)
- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support - Resource Pack for Teachers (DES, NEPS, 2007)
- 'Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life' - The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020'
- Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools - Guidelines for Primary Schools (DES, 2017)
- DES Circulars 02/2005 13/2017 07/2019 30/2014

Implementation and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in September 2017. It was reviewed again in March 2021.

Signed:

Orla O'Grady Walshe – Chairperson, Board of Management

25/3/21
Date

Frances Mullin – Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

25/3/21
Date

Appendix A

DIFFERENTIATION

Overview

Children learn differently. They have different learning rates and styles of learning. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons.
Specifically, differentiation is about:

- ***Manageable tasks***

Ensuring all children are given tasks that match their level of ability and attainment

- ***Achievable tasks***

Presenting these tasks so that children can demonstrate what they know, understand and are able to do

- ***Motivating tasks***

Allowing children to achieve success and feel the learning experience has been worthwhile

Different approaches work with different children. For example, some children have good visual memories and they will learn best with diagrams, maps, lists topic webs, flow-charts etc. and may find it easier to show their understanding in this form; some children remember what they hear (they have a good auditory memory) and they will find it easier to listen, talk about the task and respond verbally, while some other children need demonstrations by the teacher, and/or to watch other pupils doing the task and to start it themselves before understanding it.

This can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly.

Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.
(Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools – DES 2017)

Planning for Differentiation

- Select the topic to be taught
- Identify the specific content to be included
- Identify learning goals and objectives for the majority of students in the class
- Decide on the way the lesson will be organised and conducted for most students
- Identify students who will need modifications to the general lesson format
- Prepare any necessary adaptations
- Teaching the lesson, and making any necessary additional changes while teaching
- Providing extra assistance to certain students while the lesson is in progress
- Planning appropriate methods for assessing students' learning, based on the goals and objectives.

Modification of Curriculum Content

- Students with learning difficulties may be required to cover less material
- The tasks or activities they complete may be easier to accomplish
- More able students may cover more material and in greater depth
- The nature of learning tasks set for students will be matched to their learning rate and abilities in so far as is practicable
- Differentiated content for homework can be used as one way of meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities

Differentiation by resource

- Simplify language when necessary
- Provide illustrations or diagrams
- Remove unnecessary detail
- Use cues or prompts where responses are required from students
- Access to ICT

Adapting Instruction

Some of the following strategies may be used:

- The teacher may give more or less assistance to individual students, depending on their needs
- The teacher may reteach some concepts to some students using simpler language and more examples
- Questions asked during the lesson may be pitched at different levels of difficulty for different pupils
- Closer monitoring of the work of some pupils may take place throughout the lesson
- The teacher may use particular tactics to gain and maintain the interest of less-motivated pupils
- Feedback may be given in more or less detail, according to student needs
- The rate at which the students are expected to work may be varied, with extra time allowed for some students to complete tasks
- Extension and independent work may be set for more able students

Types of Differentiation *(Reference: Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support)*

Differentiation by Input	Differentiation by supporting the learning process	Differentiation by outcome
• Differentiation by instruction • Differentiation by task • Organisation of groups	• Differentiation through pace • Differentiation through support given at different times in a task	• Differentiation by quality • Differentiation by quantity • Differentiation by varying way

Examples of different types of differentiation:

Differentiation by instruction

- Presentation methods could include: written, spoken, demonstration, audio, video.
- Modelling and demonstrating the task while giving instructions and showing an example of thefinished product
- Clarifying and shortening instructions – one piece of information at a time.
- Use different colours for each line of text on the board – this helps children who lose their place
- Underline key words
- Use pictures to support understanding
- Allow a few seconds thinking time for oral responses
- Ensure pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to do and why.
- Give summary of lesson – its aims, and its findings at the end.
- Ask pupils who have difficulty following instructions to repeat them back to teacher or a partner.

Differentiation of the task

- Varying types of tasks e.g. abstract oral activities vs. experiential, interactive activities.
- Having different levels of difficulty within a task.
- Modifying materials while all children are given a similar task e.g. written tasks, picture tasks,concrete, practical materials.
- Children can work on different parts of a task e.g. research different things of interest aboutIreland.
- Use the different interests and talents of pupils.

Differentiation by groupings

This will depend on the topic being taught and the size and composition of the class. Use a variety of groups e.g.

- Whole class teaching
- Mixed ability group – (useful with regard to open-ended or creative tasks)
- Ability grouping – (it is felt that too much of this type of grouping may lower self-esteem but it may be used to effect in certain academic tasks.)
- Friendship groups
- Work in pairs
- Individual work
- Peer tutoring/buddy system
- Planning and preparation are needed and children may need to be taught to work in groups successfully. Expect higher noise levels. Seat pupils with difficulties where they can see and hear the teacher clearly

Advantages of group work

- *Prevents teacher dependence (children can problem solve with friends)*
- *Promotes collaborative and co-operative learning*
- *Enjoyable*
- *Encourages involvement in learning*

Differentiation by Output: quality, quantity and how pupils will respond

Using open-ended tasks can result in a variety of ways of doing the same activity some of which will be more developed than others. Giving children opportunities to record work in different ways e.g. instead of lots of written answers. The following suggestions might be helpful:

- Various use of ICT and Digital Learning platforms – to record/present information/findings
- Cloze Procedures
- Jotting down main points
- Sentence completion
- Topic webs/table completed with key words
- Yes/No; True/False
- Joining up parts of a sentence e.g. the start of the sentence to the end
- Writing frames for story writing
- Rearranging sentences
- Drawing lines to join question to answer
- Sequencing written sentence/paragraphs (cut & stick)
- Sequencing cartoons with key words
- Drawing the main idea
- Verbal responses to partner or teacher
- Colouring in correct answers
- Dictate to tape and have work typed for them
- Dictate to another person
- Record response on tape