



Scoil Mhuire Allenwood  
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Naas  
Co. Kildare

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# Special Educational Needs Policy

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Hierarchy of criteria
- 2.2 Inclusion
- 2.3 Setting suitable learning challenges
- 2.4 Three steps for implementing a Continuum of Support (a) Identification of need. (b) Meeting need (c) Monitoring and reviewing outcomes
- 2.5 The Staged Approach to Assessment and Provision
- 2.6 Individual Education Plan-(Now incorporated into Student Support File)
- 2.7 Review of IEPs

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Role of Board of Management
- 3.2 Role of Principal
- 3.3 Role of SEN Co-ordinator
- 3.4 Role of Class Teacher
- 3.5 Role of Special Education Teacher
- 3.6 Role of Parents

## 4. Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

- 4.1 Promotion of Literacy and Numeracy
- 4.2 Early Intervention
- 4.3 Developing Listening Skills
- 4.4 Observation and/or Assessment

## 5. Procedure for Continuing/Discontinuing Support

## 6. Timetabling

## 7. Enrolment

## 8. Special Facilities and School Resources

## 9. Complaints

## 10. Monitoring and Reviewing

## 11. The Exceptionally Able Student

## **12. Preparation for Transfer/Transition to Post Primary School**

## **13. Exemption From the Study of the Irish Language**

## **14. Visiting Teachers**

## **15. The New SEN Model**

## **16. Appendices**

### **1. Introduction**

Scoil Mhuire, Allenwood is a rural mixed school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. This policy was updated during the school year 2017/18 following the amalgamation of Allenwood BNS and Allenwood GNS on August 30<sup>th</sup> 2017 and again in September 2019. Our enrolment for 2019-20 is 258 pupils along with the Principal, ten class teachers, three SETs, one part-time/shared SET and three SNAs. The policy aims to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, guardians and other interested parties on the provision of effective support to pupils experiencing learning and behavioural difficulties as well as to fulfil our obligations under:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- Disability Bill (2002)
- E.P.S.E.N Act (2004) Circular 2017

This policy takes into account the guidelines issued by the DES and the NCSE with the introduction in 2017 of the new model to support pupils with Special Educational Needs. Some general information regarding the new model is included in section 15 of the policy

### **2. Guiding Principles:**

- All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community
- The resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs, will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school.
- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils)
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
- Schools with more than one support teacher should establish and maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.

## **2.1 Hierarchy of criteria:**

The following selection criteria encompasses current DES circulars, guidelines and general good practice. The school will select pupils in accordance with these criteria starting at point 1 and continuing on through selection criteria until caseloads are full.

***Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support (2017 guidelines p19)***

1. Pupils with significant and enduring complex needs as defined by the DES who continue to experience significant difficulties for example:  
Profound visual impairment, Profound hearing impairment, Severe emotional disturbances, Severe language disorders/delays, Severe physical disabilities, Assessed syndromes, Moderate G.L.D., ASD moderate
2. Pupils with mild general learning disabilities.
3. Early Intervention: In class support based on the priority learning needs of the class (Literacy, Numeracy, Language)
4. Pupils who have a language deficit due to English as an additional language which is impacting on their progress in Literacy/Numeracy
5. Pupils scoring at/ below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy or Mathematics
6. Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30<sup>th</sup> Percentile) on standardised assessments in Literacy or Mathematics who continue to experience difficulty despite interventions.
7. Pupils experiencing moderate/serious difficulties with oral language/social interaction/behavioural or emotional development.
8. Short Term interventions for unexpected situations through illness, absence or trauma. (nurture group).

***The level of support may change based on child's needs and progress irrespective of their placement on the hierarchy of needs.***

## **2.2 Inclusion:**

As far as possible, we aim to minimise difficulties that children may experience and help them develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document, aims to enable children with SEN and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them. We will also encourage parents to support their children's learning.

## **2.3 Setting Suitable Learning Challenges:**

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible, within their own ability. In order to do this, we will use the 'Continuum of Support Process' as outlined in the following Table 1. This is central to setting suitable learning challenges for our SEN pupils. Using the continuum of support framework, our school will identify pupils' educational needs to include

academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. It is important to look at a pupil's needs in context, and to use our resources to support this.

## **2.4 Three steps for Implementation of a Continuum of Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs:**

<b>Step 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process</b>	
<b>Classroom Support</b>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan using the 'Student Support File' template is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This plan may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental consultation</li> <li>• Teacher observation records</li> <li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>• Basic needs checklist</li> <li>• Learning environment checklist</li> <li>• Pupil consultation – 'My Thoughts About School' Checklist</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy tests</li> </ul> <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
<b>School Support</b>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised, again, using the 'Student Support File' template and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation records/teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li> <li>• Learning environment checklist</li> <li>• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy (Dyslexia Portfolio, Drumcondra Spelling, etc)</li> <li>• Formal observation of behaviour (eg ABC charts/frequency measures)</li> <li>• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</li> </ul> <p>A support plan at this level may include team-teaching/ small groups/ individual tuition. It operates for an agreed period of time and is reviewed.</p>
<b>School Support Plus</b>	<p>This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures</li> <li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li> <li>• Functional assessment</li> <li>• Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc</li> </ul> <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>

## **Step 2: Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs**

We will take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning. The Staged Approach as outlined below will be utilised. See also the six point 'Action Plan' (Taken from Primary Guidelines, P19-20) detailed in Appendix 3:

## **Step 3: Monitoring and Reviewing Outcomes:**

We will review and record progress and plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. Focus will be on support plans that are clear, useful and easy to interpret. Outcomes can be reviewed at individual, group, class and whole school level. The Principal and Special Education Teachers will meet periodically to discuss issues such as:

- Implementation of the school's early intervention programme;
- Screening programmes for selection of pupils for diagnostic assessment;
- Progress of pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching;
- Referral of pupils for additional assessment and support, etc

Time is set aside on Friday afternoons to facilitate communication between the Special Education Teachers and the Class Teacher/Principal/Parents on the progress of pupils.

## **2.5 The Staged Approach to Assessment and Provision**

### **Stage One:**

Access to the school curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a class teacher identifies a child with SEN, he/she consults with the SEN coordinator and provides interventions that are ADDITIONAL TO or DIFFERENT FROM those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the class teacher who will initially discuss concerns with the child's parents.

The triggers for this intervention could be:

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
- Has sensory or physical difficulties
- Has communication and/ or relationship difficulties

The class teacher completes a Classroom Support Plan and monitors the Record of Differentiated Support for a period of time. If this strategy does not work then the teacher will continue to the next stage, School Action.

### **Stage Two**

In cases where the Record of Differentiated Support indicates that progress has not been made, or if the results of tests and teacher observation indicate this to be the case, intervention in the form of a support teacher might be accessed.

Formal Assessment tests are carried out periodically and results are recorded on the Aladdin system by Class Teachers or by the SET team. When children score at or below the 30<sup>th</sup> Percentile in the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test or Sigma T Assessment, or where support needs are highlighted in tests such as the Early Infant Assessment, Drumcondra Early Literacy, Drumcondra Spelling, NRIT, Dyslexia Portfolio, etc class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

**Teachers inform Parents that their child's needs would be better served in a small group with a support teacher. Parents will need to sign a consent form. If**

**parents do not wish to proceed with Learning Support, they must notify the school in writing.**

- The class teacher and support teacher will differentiate the curriculum in specific areas with achievable goals to be implemented by both teachers.
- If there are others in the class with similar difficulties in one or more of the specific areas, then a group educational plan will be implemented.
- These programmes will be reviewed and updated periodically.
- While every effort will be made to allow the SEN group/individual to remain included in class, (through differentiation/through the practice of Team/Parallel or Station Teaching Sessions), there may be a need to work part of the programme in another room with the support teacher. This withdrawal will be time limited- Where the child's progress is no longer causing concern, the child will revert to the usual differentiated curriculum in class and parents will be informed.

### **Stage Three**

The support or class teacher will perform diagnostic tests on these children (at School Action) usually at the beginning and end of the school year.

When it has been identified that a child is still struggling despite School Action, the class teacher with the support teacher and SEN coordinators, in consultation with the child's parents, may consider the following actions:

1. A psychological assessment may be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004)
2. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including targets and strategies.
3. The triggers for extra intervention could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child:
  - Makes little or no progress over a long period of time and continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
  - Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
  - Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme
  - Has sensory and/or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
  - Has an ongoing communication or relationship difficulty that prevents social development, and act as a barrier to learning.
4. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child has care needs, a special needs assistant may be applied for.
5. In circumstances where a child uses specialised equipment (indoors or outdoors), consultants will be required to demonstrate how equipment is to be used to at least two SNAs and either the class or support teachers. Courses will be provided to train staff where relevant.
6. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from the study of Irish the Principal will see to this under guidance from the DES (See section 13.)

### **2.6 Individual Education Plan- (Now incorporated into Student Support File)**

Based on Psychologist's report, tests, and School Support Plan the class teacher with the support teacher, parents and representatives of outside agencies (if necessary) formulate an Individual Education Plan as part of the Student Support File- (See section 15). This involves a small-steps approach, breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded targets to ensure that the child experiences success. This plan includes:

- the nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills
- the degree of the child's special needs,
- the present level of performance,
- services to be provided,

- services for transition to 2<sup>nd</sup> level school where appropriate,
- goals which the child is to achieve over a period of half a year.

The strategies set out in the plan will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting. The management of these strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher, support teacher and the SEN coordinator.

## **2.7 Review of IEPs**

The SEN coordinator will ensure that the review is conducted at the end of January and end of June. The class teacher consults with the support teacher, the parents (and SNA if appointed). They agree on the expected outcomes of the plan. A draft copy is formulated and parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss or make recommendations to the draft review if they so wish. Again, outside agencies may play a part in formulating the final copy. The review will be recorded on the Student Support File.

Where progress is unsatisfactory it may be decided that the child continues to receive additional supports. If progress is satisfactory, and the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision will be made to revert to School Action.

Information from the review in June will be used to formulate an updated IEP, which will be part of the plan for the next teacher in September.

IEPs for children moving to 2<sup>nd</sup> level will be referred to at the consultation meetings with the 2nd level representative.

## **3. Roles and Responsibilities:**

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning if we do not address them through special arrangements. Our SEN policy envisages a whole-school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, principal, class teacher, special education teacher and parents. In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BoM, principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

### **3.1 Role of Board of Management**

The Board of Management will:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on support for children with extra needs
- Provide adequate class accommodation and teaching resources
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records.

### **3.2 Role of Principal**

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. She will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the Board of Management informed about the working of this policy. She will strive to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- 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 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

### **3.3 Role of Special Needs Co-ordinator**

The Special Needs Co-ordinator in consultation with the Principal, will be responsible for:

- Overseeing day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs and organising the timetable for support teaching. The caseload will be decided on by the SEN team following analysis of Student Support Files and formal end of year test results. It is also based on future staffing arrangements and incoming pupils.
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers, SNAs and parents with regard to supporting children with SEN and monitoring and evaluating SEN provision
- Keeping a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching
- Facilitating planning for class teacher with support teacher
- Supporting and monitoring progress of children who avail of additional support
- Keeping teachers/parents informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals
- Selecting children for psychological assessment in consultation with the Principal, class and support teachers and with NEPS Psychologist.
- Liaising with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children
- Liaising with SENo and Principal regarding aspects of special education provision
- Storing confidential information in a locked filing cabinet (Psychological Assessment Reports, Lists of Test Results, etc.) and sharing them with Principal, class teachers, support teachers and other agencies where appropriate.
- Participating in/ overseeing the drafting of IEPs/IPLPs/classroom support plans
- Arranging, along with the Principal for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate (As recommended in a Psychological Report)

### **2.4 Role of Class Teacher**

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. **Mainstream class teachers have primary responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes**

and should ensure that they plan lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. This will include adapting teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. Mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These might include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Co-ordinating with SET to provide blocks of In-Class Support in lieu of withdrawing pupils for support
- Embedding ICT in teaching, learning and assessment

Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum, appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons and adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests, abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology

- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly
- Using a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies-eg active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

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

Special education teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions should be based on careful identification of individual strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary. This may take the form of:

- curriculum support
- life and/or social skills training, work on developing positive self esteem
- preparation for transitioning to Secondary Level School in senior classes
- physical training/gross motor development/fine motor development
- speech training/communication and/or language development
- behaviour modification programmes
- assistance with sensory modulation
- development of anger management strategies
- a combination of some/all of the above

Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the continuum of support plan. Short-term planning should reflect the support plan targets. Outcomes for pupils should be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress and should also inform future targets. Our school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school.

## **2.6 Role of Parents**

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. There may also be opportunities for parents to work collaboratively with the school through initiatives such as paired reading or visits for World Book Day. Parents can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child, practising aspects of Mathematics such as telling the time, weighing and measuring, money, etc, with their child
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading, tables, spellings
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing outcomes with the teacher/s.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding support teaching.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Attending meetings and keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Visiting library, museums, art galleries, exhibitions, etc with their child

- Helping child to develop organisational skills and to look after school resources
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school

## **4. Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties**

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

### **4.1 Promotion of Literacy and Numeracy:**

- Whole school promotion of Reading for Pleasure, Class novels, Strategies for Oral Language Activities-Semantic gradients, themed approach, Aistear at Infant level
- Building Bridges Comprehension Strategies, Genre Writing
- In-Class Support/Early Intervention in Infant Classes
- Paired Reading (Junior Infants - 2<sup>nd</sup> Class with senior classes as reading partners)
- Print rich environment, Local Quiz and Handwriting Competitions, Book exchange
- Blocks of Team Teaching/In-Class Support for Literacy and Numeracy
- Story time, Library time, DEAR time, Book Week, Reading buddies, Word games, Class library, Mobile Library, visiting authors, Card Games, Loop Games
- Access to Literacy and Numeracy apps on school computers and at home
- Vocabulary notebooks in use for English and Mathematics
- Opportunities for practical Mathematical activities- yard markings, games, etc
- Concrete materials used widely and children are encouraged to use estimating and problem solving skills such as 'RUDE'
- Maths challenges are displayed to encourage participation in fun activities

### **4.2 Early Intervention**

We believe it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible so that effective interventions can be put in place. Early Infant Screening tests (Hodder and Staunton) are administered at the end of Junior Infants. The Drumcondra Early Literacy Test is administered to all pupils at the end of Senior Infants. Pupils who present with lower scores are selected for extra group work with the SET. This may be facilitated as an in-class group or the group may be withdrawn to focus on an aspect of literacy such as Phonics, Paired Reading, PAT, Comprehension, etc.

### **4.3. Developing Listening Skills:**

Promoting a classroom environment where children listen to others, do not interrupt the speaker and wait their turn; Circle time, Listening games/activities; Listening Programmes; Listening to music; Mindfulness activities

### **4.4. Observation and/or assessment:**

- Observation/assessment methods could take the form of: personal checklists, record sheet with name of each child, shared observation (2<sup>nd</sup> opinion), listening to reading, general correction of homework, reading records, questioning, paired reading, teacher's own observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, portfolios-samples of written work, project work, children's self-assessment- use of smiley faces etc. as well as a range of Standardized Tests for example- MICRA T, SIGMA T, Drumcondra Reading and Spelling tests, Drumcondra Early literacy and numeracy screening tests, Early Infant Screening tests (Hodder and Staunton), NRIT, etc and diagnostic tests for example- M.I.S.T., Dyslexia Portfolio Assessment, BIAP, Schonell Reading/Decoding/Spelling tests etc.
- Teacher may share concerns with: Last year's/next year's teacher, similar level teacher, parents, SET, Principal, SEN co-ordinator.

## **5. Procedure for Continuing/Discontinuing Support**

At the end of a term or following Standardised Testing, a decision can be made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching for pupils who receive support under the General Allocation Model (G.A.M.) Criteria on which this decision is based might include:

- Successful achievement of learning targets
- Whether or not the child can cope independently or semi-independently in the classroom learning context
- Results of assessments and diagnostic tests

The decision involves consultation between the class teacher and Special Education Teacher. Account is also taken of the overall learning support demands throughout the school. If a pupil will no longer be in receipt of support, parents will be informed.

**Note:** Pupils who are diagnosed as having Specific Learning Difficulties may continue to receive Learning Support if required.

## **6. Timetabling**

- Provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Mathematics.
- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend Learning Support/Resource Class. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher so as to minimise class disruption.
- The provision of Learning Support/Resource Teaching may include withdrawal of pupil(s) 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 Special Education Teacher(s)

## **7. Enrolment**

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled.

The 'Education For Persons with Special Educational Needs Act', 2004 states that:

***'A child with SEN shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the degree or nature of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with-***

***(a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or***

***(b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated'***

In keeping with the school's enrolment policy, parents are required to notify the school of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school. Parents/guardians of children with SEN will be asked to provide relevant medical/psychological reports so that the Board of Management can seek access to the necessary resources before the child is accepted. Parents/Guardians will meet the principal and the SEN co-ordinator and draw up a needs profile for the child, taking account of issues such as access, mobility, toileting, supervision, administration of medicines, safety, assistive technology, transport, etc. Supports will be accessed from NCSE as appropriate.

## **8. Special Facilities and Resources**

Scoil Mhuire, Allenwood, consists of two single storey buildings with ramps where appropriate. The front building has an electronic gate and electronic, sliding front doors. It also has adapted toilet facilities and a changing room. Where specialised equipment is to be used, training will be given to staff as required.

Scoil Mhuire, Allenwood, is a well-resourced school, which constantly monitors and updates its resources both for academic and non-academic activities. I.T. provision is good and is updated periodically.

## **9. Complaints**

If parents have a complaint about Special Education provision, they should in the first instance make an appointment to speak to the SEN coordinator and/or the principal. The complaint will be investigated and dealt with as early as possible. If the matter is not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, then the matter proceeds to the Board of Management.

## **10. Monitoring and Reviewing**

Pupils' progress in relation to achieving their targets will be regularly and carefully monitored. This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (such as teacher-designed tests, checklists, work samples, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This will lead to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe as follows:

- Determine current level of performance
- Identify specific time-bound targets
- Measure progress and repeat the process

Outcomes will be reviewed at individual, group, class and whole-school level. This review might include: attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for pupils with special educational needs.

## **11. The Exceptionally Able Student:**

At Scoil Mhuire, we are committed to providing an environment which encourages all pupils to maximise their potential. We strive to provide learning opportunities for all abilities across a range of curriculum areas so that talents can be nurtured in many areas of school life. Work can be differentiated (in terms of pace, resources, task, support, dialogue, etc) so as to facilitate the needs of exceptionally able students. The use of ICT and In-Class Support can also provide scope for students to work at a pace appropriate to their abilities. Information can be accessed through the school regarding outside agencies that also cater for the needs of children with exceptional ability.

## **12. Preparation for Transfer/Transition to Post Primary School:**

It is the duty of the Parents/Guardians of the pupil to inform the Post-Primary School of their child's needs. In May/June each year, staff from the local Post-Primary School liaise with the Principal, the 6<sup>th</sup> Class Teacher and the SEN co-ordinator regarding the needs of the pupils. The pupil's School Passport transitions with the child to second level. It is sometimes recommended that a child, accompanied by his/her parent might do an orientation visit to the new school during the summer holidays in order to become familiar with the new surroundings in advance of the new school term. Where appropriate, the SEN teacher will periodically arrange blocks of 'Social Classes' for small groups of children, usually from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes to cover topics such as Self Esteem, Use of Lockers, Timetables, Making New Friends and Joining in, Conversations, Study

Routines, etc in preparation for transition. In some cases advice may be sought from other professionals regarding the transition of pupils with SEN.

### **13. Exemptions from the Study of the Irish Language:**

We are required to observe the following prescribed procedures in relation to granting pupils exemptions from Irish:

- A written application will be made by the parent or guardian to the Principal. This application will specify the grounds on which the exemption is sought and it will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence.
- Where exemption is being sought under sub-paragraph 1(c) of Circular 12/96, the parent/guardian will be required to furnish reports from a qualified psychologist and/or appropriate medical specialist
- Parents will receive written confirmation from the school Principal if a decision has been made to grant the exemption.
- A copy of the exemption certification should be sent to the relevant Second Level School once the pupil has completed his/her Primary Education.

### **14. Visiting Teachers:**

These teachers provide specific support and advice in relation to difficulties such as Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment. As of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the management of visiting teachers transferred from the DES to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). Visiting teachers are qualified teachers with particular skills and knowledge of the development and education of children with varying degrees of hearing loss and/or visual impairment. They offer longitudinal support to children, their families and schools from the time of referral through to the end of post-primary education. Each visiting teacher (VT) is responsible for a particular region and is allocated a caseload of students. The VT supports children/young people, parents, guardians, teachers and other professionals involved with the child. The frequency and nature of support takes into account a range of factors based on the individual's needs. The work of the VT involves liaising with other professionals and agencies such as audiological scientists, ophthalmology services, speech and language therapists, low vision specialists, psychologists, early intervention teams, school staff, and with parents. More information is available on the NCSE website.

### **15. The New SEN Model:**

From September 2017, there has been a new model in place to support pupils with Special Educational Needs in all Primary Schools. Guidelines have been issued by the Dept of Education and Skills and by the National Council for Special Education. Full details are available on the DES website.

The goal of this new model is to allocate and deploy additional teaching resources for students with special educational needs in a fair and more equitable way.

Schools decide how additional teaching supports are deployed so as to facilitate inclusion and cater for all students requiring additional support. The deployment of resources is based on pupils' identified needs and is informed by regular reviews of their progress, in consultation with their parents and external professional bodies where applicable. Procedures for identification of pupils for additional support have been outlined above.

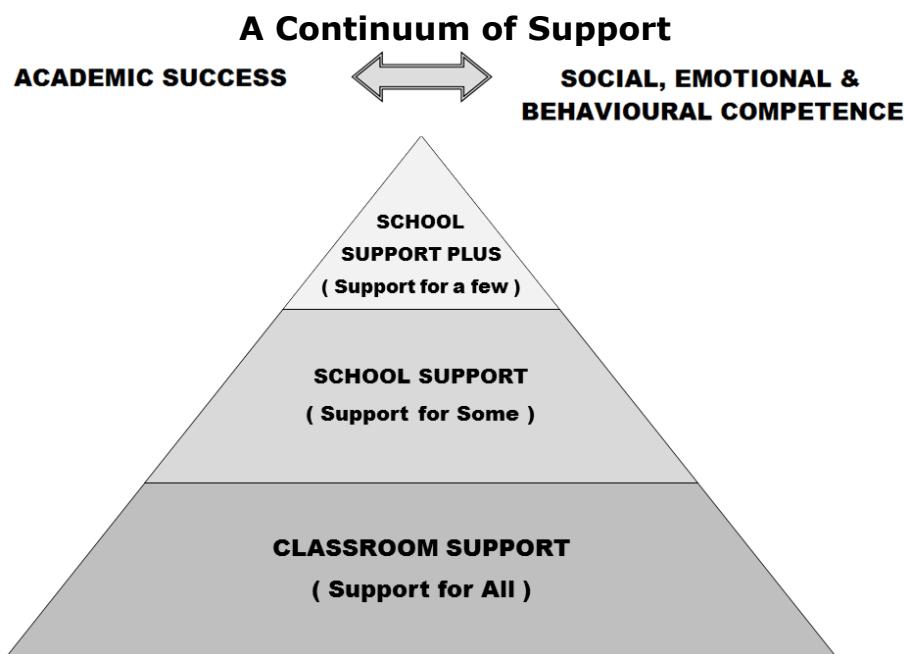
Differentiation is a key factor in an effective learning environment and Team Teaching, Small Group Teaching (inside or outside the classroom) and One to One Teaching all have a role to play in promoting inclusive learning.

In the case of pupils with additional needs, Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) – as discussed previously in this document - will continue to be used in our school **but will be incorporated into a**

**template recommended by this new model called the Student Support File.** (See Appendix 1) The class teacher, support teacher, parents and external support services (where applicable) will all be involved in this process.

## Appendix 1

<b>Student Support File</b>	
<b>Name of Student:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	
<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date File Opened:</b>	
<b>Date File Closed:</b>	



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

## Student Support File, Log of Actions

Date	Actions

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**SUPPORT PLAN\***

*Classroom Support  
School Support (Support for SOME)  
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)*

**To be completed by the Teacher(s)**

For help, see 'SEN, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', BESD: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers pp.71-74; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

<b>Student's Name:</b>		<b>Age:</b>	
<b>Lead Teacher:</b>		<b>Class/Year:</b>	
<b>Start Date of Plan:</b>			
<b>Review Date of Plan:</b>			
<b>Student's Strengths and Interests:</b>			
<b>Priority Concerns:</b>			
<b>Possible Reasons for Concerns :</b>			
<b>Targets for the Student:</b>			
<b>Strategies to help the Student Achieve the Targets:</b>			
<b>Staff Involved and Resources Needed:</b>			
<b>Signature of Parent(s)/Guardian(s):</b>			
<b>Signature of Teacher:</b>			

**SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD\***

*Classroom Support  
School Support (Support for SOME)  
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)*

**To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.**

For help, see 'SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers', 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers', 'Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools'.

<b>Student's Name:</b>	Class/ Year:
<b>Names of those present at review:</b>	Date of Review:
<b>What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?</b>	
<b>Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them</b>	
<b>Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan? If so, how?</b>	
<b>Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?</b>	
<b>Any comments from the student?</b>	
<b>Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?</b>	
<b>Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s):</b>	
<b>Signature of teacher(s):</b>	

**Outcome of Review (tick as appropriate):**

Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support	Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
Continue at Current Level of Support	Request consultation with other professionals

\*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this review

## Appendix 2:

<b>Support Checklist</b>		
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Class:</b>
<b>General Information:</b>	<b>Date Checked:</b>	<b>Comments:</b>
1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Consulted:		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered:		
3. Hearing:		
4. Vision:		
5. Medical Needs:		
6. Basic Needs Checklist Completed:		
7. Assessment of learning-screening:		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning:		
9. Observation of Behaviour:		
10. Interview with Pupil:		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
<b>Action needed</b>		

### **Appendix 3:**

Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs	Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (eg, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests). Identify pupils with special educational needs and match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.
Action 2: Setting targets	Based on needs, set clear learning targets for pupils/groups of pupils at each level of the continuum of support using the 'Student Support File' template.
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for pupils on the continuum of support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.
Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.
Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources	Cross-reference the needs of pupils at school support and school support plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.
Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress	Ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers</li><li>• At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers.</li></ul>

## **Appendix 4: Record of Differentiated Support in class**

## **Register of Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework**

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports	Focus of Support
			Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard
School Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support
School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support

This policy is subject to review following the issue of NCCA Guidelines or at least every 3 years.

Policy was upafted on 2/09/2019

Ratified by the Board of Management on 16/09/2019

Rated by the Board of Management on 18/09/2015  
Signatures: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson Principal