



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY**

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### *INTRODUCTION*

This policy was compiled in collaboration with the teaching staff, special education personnel, parents and members of the Board of Management during the 2018/2019 school year. It was reviewed in term 1 of the 2024/2024 school year.

### *SCHOOL DETAILS*

School name	Gaelscoil Bhun Cranncha
Roll Number	20097G
Current number on rolls	70
SEN Allocation (2019-2021)	52.5 hours Múinteoir Siúinín/Duailtín (Jobshare): 25 hours Múinteoir Pól: 25 hours Múinteoir Caitlín: 2.5 hours
Special Needs Assistants	M. Andrea M.Sinéad M.Catriona.M.Ailsa (Jobshare)

### *AIMS and OBJECTIVES*

This policy aims to provide for the following:

- The provision of a structured approach to the provision of supports for Special Educational Needs on a whole-school basis
- Practical guidance for teachers, SEN staff, parents and other relevant parties in respect of school SEN practices
- The early and effective identification of students' needs
- The allocation of school resources to best cater for the identified Special Educational Needs
- Specified roles and responsibilities
- Appropriate assessment, reporting and review procedures throughout the school.

### *CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT*

In accordance with the Continuum of Support Framework, there are three levels of support identified within a school. At each of these levels we follow the same approach:

- Identification of Needs
- Gathering information
- Providing relevant support and allocating school resources

In some cases, our staff may not have the necessary training or knowledge to support all of a student's needs. In these cases, the school will engage with external organisations and bodies in order to provide the most effective supports for the student. Parents will be involved in this process and the school will facilitate any necessary meetings or training.

### *Stage 1: Classroom Support*

<b>Classroom Support</b>	<p><b>Class teachers</b> differentiate class tasks and activities for the student as necessary.</p> <p>A <b>Classroom Support Plan</b> is compiled in collaboration with parents.</p> <p>The following resources will be used to inform this plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information from parents</li><li>• Teacher observation</li><li>• Teacher-designed assessment</li><li>• Basic Skills Checklist (BESD Guidelines, DES)</li><li>• Learning Environment Checklist (BESD Guidelines, DES)</li><li>• Information from the student – My thoughts about school checklist</li><li>• Standardised tests in literacy and/or numeracy</li><li>• Screening tests</li></ul> <p><b>Classroom Support Plans</b> are put in place for a period of 8 weeks and then reviewed. Following review, it will be decided whether or not a student should move to <b>Stage 2: School Support</b>.</p>
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### *Stage 2: School Support*

<b>School Support</b>	<p>Following the review a <b>Classroom Support Plan</b>, <b>School Support</b> may be provided to students (if deemed necessary).</p> <p>SEN teachers prepare the <b>School Support Plan</b> in collaboration with classroom teachers, SNAs (if applicable) and parents/guardians.</p> <p>The following resources will be used to inform this plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information from parents</li><li>• Teacher observation records</li><li>• Teacher-designed assessments</li><li>• Classroom Support Plan</li><li>• Various checklists</li><li>• Standardised test in literacy and/or numeracy</li><li>• Diagnostic testing</li></ul> <p>This plan will specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The type of support provided</li><li>• Learning targets for the first period</li><li>• Approaches to be used by SEN teacher, classroom teacher &amp; parents</li><li>• Timeframe for review</li></ul>
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### *Stage 3: School Support Plus*

<b>School Support Plus</b>	<p>At this stage, parents and school personnel have taken the decision to engage with outside agencies to seek further support for the student.</p> <p>These agencies may use formal assessment tools to provide clear recommendations and guidelines to support the student.</p> <p>Such agencies include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NEPS</li><li>• NCSE</li><li>• PDST</li><li>• CAMHS</li><li>• Educational psychologist</li><li>• Tusla</li><li>• NDT</li><li>• Speech &amp; Language therapists</li><li>• Occupational therapists</li></ul> <p>School Support Plus plans include specific targets and activities to more fully address the individual needs of the student.</p>
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#### *IDENTIFYING NEEDS*

It is of the utmost importance that students' needs are identified as early as possible to allow for early-intervention strategies to be agreed with parents. As soon as students commence their education in our school, therefore, we are mindful of potential special educational needs:

- Academic needs
- Social needs
- Emotional and/or behavioural needs
- Physical needs
- Sensory needs
- Language and/or communication needs

When students are enrolled in our school, parents/guardians are asked to provide the school with any known details of SEN their child may have in order for us to support the students as early and as effectively as possible.

#### *ASSESSMENT AND GATHERING INFORMATION*

Our school's assessment practices are outlined in our school **Assessment** Policy. Teacher assessments include the following:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tests and tasks
- Standardised tests
- Information from parents
- Any reports from external agencies

When the need for **School Support** has been identified, screening and diagnostic tests will be used along with other assessment methods. The following tests are used in our school:

	Screening tests	Diagnostic tests
<b>Literacy: Gaeilge</b>	Triail Ghaeilge Dhroim Chonrach (R1-6)	Running Record Sight Words (Féasta Focal & Cleite) Sounds & Letter Names Checklists
<b>Literacy: English</b>	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (R1-6) SWST (R1-6)	MIST (Naíonáin Mhóra) Dyslexia Screener (DST) Reading analysis (Neale analysis) Phonological Awareness Battery British Ability Scale NEPS – Phonics Skills Checklist NEPS – First/Second Hundred Words List Dolch Athghabháil Léitheoireachta Reading Reflex Sound Linkage Schonell Word Spelling Test STAR Reading (AR)
<b>Mathematics</b>	Drumcondra Mathematics Tests (R1-6)	Drumcondra Tests of Early Numeracy
<b>Other</b>	BPVS (Junior Infants) Bury Infant (Junior Infants) NRIT (R2 & R5)	

#### *EARLY INTERVENTION STRATEGIES*

We recognise the importance of early identification and early intervention strategies for students with SEN. The following whole-school strategies are used to support our students:

- Whole-school approach to Oral Language teaching in both Gaeilge and English
- Emphasis on phonemic awareness before the introduction of reading
- Class-based support through co-teaching or station teaching for literacy and numeracy
- Guided Reading for English (Oxford Reading Tree)
- Comprehension programmes for middle- and senior-classes in both Gaeilge and English
- Aistear in Infant classes
- Social skills groups throughout the school

#### *ALLOCATION OF SCHOOL RESOURCES*

In consultation with the principal, the school SEN co-ordinator compiles a plan for the equitable allocation of school resources for students with SEN each year. At the heart of this planning process is the core belief the **students with the highest levels of need will have access to the highest levels of support**. This allocation is constantly reviewed in the context of identified needs within the school.

We provide support for:

- Literacy: Gaeilge and English
- Numeracy
- Other support: social, physical, sensory, emotional, behavioural and communication needs

We aim to have a balance between

- In-class support
- Small group support (in-class and withdrawal)
- Individual support (withdrawal)

Regular communication takes place between SEN teachers, classroom teachers, SNAs, parents and the principal. Provision for students with SEN is reviewed at the beginning, middle (January) and end of each school year.

#### *SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS*

Special Needs Assistants have a central role to play in the provision of support for some of our students. SNAs are allocated to our school through an application process with the NCSE. As with all allocations, it is imperative that **students with the highest levels of need will have access to the highest levels of support.**

Regular communication takes place between SNAs, classroom teachers and SEN teachers to identify and agree targets, main areas of focus and intervention strategies for the relevant students. Under the guidance of the class teacher, SNAs provide targeted and specific support to enable our students access the curriculum to the best of their ability.

To support the work of SNAs and our SEN staff, the school has provided sensory trails, a sensory room, resources for the Braincalm programme and other resources. SNAs support the students during breaktimes as well as within the classroom environment.

#### *ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES*

To provide comprehensive, sustainable and progressive support for our students, members of our school community have specific roles to fulfil. Co-operation and a spirit of collegiality are necessary to ensure that all those involved are working together for the benefit of all our students.

#### **Board of Management:**

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the school's Special Education Policy
- Provide suitable rooms and resources for the SEN team
- Provide secure cabinets for the retention of SEN documentation.

#### **Principal and school SEN Team:**

The principal has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the SEN policy within the school.

- Implement the school's Special Education policy
- Ensure that **students with the highest levels of need will have access to the highest levels of support**
- Equitable allocation of school resources

- Set out whole-school approaches to facilitate the participation of teachers, SNAs, parents, students and external agencies
- Implement an effective system to identify and review students' SEN needs
- Organise relevant professional development for school staff
- Analyse school results to identify and organise groups for SET provision
- Liaise with NCSE through the school SENO
- Provide information about external agencies to staff members
- Meet with parents about their concerns or their children's needs
- Attend multi-disciplinary meetings as necessary

**Class teacher:**

- Implement a learning programme which allows each students to learn and progress
- Create a positive learning environment
- Plan for meaningful differentiation to cater for varying learning needs within a class
- Administer and correct standardised tests
- Use the results of thsoe test in conjunction with other assessment tools to identify individual needs and appropriately support those students
- Keep parents informed of their children's progress
- Use the Continuum of Support Framework guide teaching and learning, gather relevant information and identify individual needs
- Create, review and revise Classroom Support Plans for any students with identified needs who are at Stage 1 of the Continuum of Support
- Work collaboratively with SEN teachers to develop School Support Plans
- Work collaboratively with other staff members to provide opportunities for team-teaching, co-teaching or station teaching
- Guide and direct SNAs working in their classroom and organise regular meetings between SNAs, classroom teachers and SEN teachers to develop a Personal Student Plan for students receiving SNA support.

**SEN teachers:**

- Become familiar with teaching methodologies, learning programmes, strategies, etc. to cater for a variety of SEN and learning styles
- Support school strategies for early intervention
- Organise a timetable for students on their caseload
- Develop School Support Plans for students who are at Stage 2/3 of the Continuum of Support Framework
- Organise standardised testing for each class
- Regularly review and re-draft School Support plans for students
- Maintain accurate notes and progress reports for students
- Assist with the administration of screening and standardised tests
- Administer diagnostic tests, analyse the results and share this information with class teachers and parents
- Undertake meetings with parents to review their child's progress
- Liaise with external agencies such as NEPS, SESS, etc. to seek advice or resources for students
- Advise class teachers about groups or individual students

## **Special Needs Assistants**

- Assist students to access the school curriculum
- Cater for students' care and welfare needs
- Support the implementation of school policies – Child Protection, Health & Safety, Code of BeHAViour, etc.
- Support teaching and learning in the school
- Cater for students' individual needs e.g. sensory, physical, emotional, etc.
- Implement Personal Student Plans
- Undertake professional development provided by the Board of Management
- Attend regular meetings with class and SEN teachers

## **Parents/Guardians**

Ongoing co-operation between home and school is an essential factor in the success of this plan and forms an integral part of planning for Special Education provision within our school.

We expect parents/guardians to:

- Share any information or reports pertaining to their child's needs with the school;
- Inform the school of their concerns about their child;
- Attend meeting organised by class or Special Education teachers;
- Support the agreed targets to cater to their child's particular needs;
- Inform their chose secondary schools or their child's identified needs.

We regularly recommend activities to parents to support their child's learning and development. Those activities include:

- Shared Reading
- Encouraging and praising their children
- Frequent discussion with children to promote language acquisition and fluency
- Choosing suitable reading materials for their child
- Visits to places of interest to foster an interest in learning
- Encouraging their child to use the local library
- Organise activities to support the social and emotional development of their child e.g. sports activities, drama, choir, etc.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Effective communication between school staff and parents/guardians is essential. If a class teacher/Special Education teacher/other staff member identifies a student's need, they will contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible. Such communication will occur in the following circumstances:

- Should a need be identified by a staff member;
- Should behavioural challenges be identified;
- Should further assessment be advisable within school (diagnostic testing) or by an outside agency which would better inform school support for a particular child's identified needs
- When a support plan is being compiled to agree suitable targets and objectives

### SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

To provide comprehensive support for our students, we firmly believe in the importance of developmental whole-school strategies.

While some elements of school support are tailored to individual students' needs, other elements can be best met by using a developmental school programme.

Below is a list of programmes used to support our students:

LITERACY		NUMERACY	Other Support
GAEILGE	ENGLISH		
Féasta Focail An Clár Luathléitheoireachta (CLEITE) An Chaora Dubh Cód na Gaeilge Fuaimeanna & Focail Taisce Tuisceana Fís le Fonaic	Jolly Phonics Toe by Toe Reading Recovery Reading Reflex Time for Sounds Sound Linkage Phonic Code Cracker Spelling Made Easy Brendan Culligan - Litriú Dibbles Help for Vocabulary No Glamour Language No Glamour Vocabulary No Glamour Auditory Processing	Gafa le Mata Mata Meabhrach Seaimpín na dTáblaí Réidh, Socair, Déan	Brain Calm Weaving Wellbeing Talkabout for Children Cool Kids Keep Cool Scéalta Sóisialta NEPS Activities to Develop Expressive Language Skills NEPS Activities to Develop Receptive Language & Comprehension Skills NEPS Language Group Activities

### RECORD KEEPING

A comprehensive and developmental approach is best-suited to providing effective support to the students in our school. Clear and consistent guidance is needed to effectively plan for interventions to support identified student needs, be they academic and/or social, emotional or behavioural. Essential elements of this whole-school support structure are the early identification of needs, effective intervention planning, agreed objectives and the progress monitoring.

As part of the Continuum of Support, we use Student Support Files for our students in receipt of classroom support, school support and school support plus. For us, these files provide a comprehensive and accurate record of identified needs and relevant interventions over time and assist in identifying the most suitable levels of intervention and support for all our students.

Separate Student Support Files are compiled for intervention in Literacy (Gaeilge and English), Numeracy and Resource Support. Support files are kept in a locked cabinet in the Special Education classrooms. When students transfer to secondary schools, their current level of support is documented in the Education Passports.

Student Support Files should contain:

- Support plan including student details, standardized & diagnostic results timeline with decisions regarding that student, record of support received.

- Letter of consent from parents
- Reports from external sources regarding the student
- Checklists where appropriate

At the end of each school year, Student Support Files are reviewed to inform the allocation of school resources for the following year. When students leave the school, Student Support Files are retained in line with current Data Retention guidance.

#### *REVIEW and SUCCESS CRITERIA*

School allocations for Special Education are published by the NCSE every second year and this policy will be reviewed in light of those allocations.

The principles, roles and responsibilities will be reviewed every five years.

The following criteria will be used to inform review:

- Whole-school support for students' identified needs
- Feedback from teachers and other members of the Special Education staff
- Feedback and/or recommendations from school inspectors or other visitors to the school e.g. educational psychologists, SENO, NEPS, etc.
- Parental feedback

#### *RATIFICATION and COMMUNICATION*

This policy was presented to and ratified by the Board of Management on **20/11/2024**. Following ratification, it was published on the school website and is available from the school office on request.

#### **Síniú / Signature:**

Colm Ó Tuathaláin  
Cathaoirleach

Pól Mac Daibhéid  
Príomhoide

**Dáta:** 22/11/2024