



## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

St. Clare's Convent Primary School is a co-educational Catholic vertical school with four AS Classes for primary school aged students, together with special needs students integrated in mainstream classes. The Special Educational Needs Policy was reviewed and updated during the school year 2018-2019 by the Special Education Team and the Principal in consultation with staff. The policy was revised in line with the Education Act 1998, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Equal Status Act 2000, Data Protection Acts 1998 & 2003, Disability Act 2002, Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004, Assessment in Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools (NCCA 2007) and Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support (2007). St. Clare's adheres to the terms of the current circulars on special education provision published by the Department of Education and Skills.

## **RATIONALE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the provision of effective special education teaching for students under the continuum of support model in St. Clare's. The core of the policy is that each student should experience success at school.

This policy has been devised to:

- Cater for the enrolment of students with special educational needs in a mainstream class and/or in an AS class.
- Comply with legislation and the Department of Education Circulars.
- Streamline the provision of special education support in the school.

## **DEFINITION OF A SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED**

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 defines a special educational need as:

*'A restriction in capacity to participate in and benefit from education due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition'*

The EPSEN Act 2004 recognises that special educational needs may arise from four different areas of disability:

- physical
- sensory
- mental health
- learning disability

or from any other condition that results in the child learning differently from a child without that condition. It is also important to understand that a child can have a disability but not have any special educational needs arising from that disability which require additional supports in school.



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## Profile

St. Clare's Convent Primary School is a convent Catholic school founded in 1803 by the Sisters of St. Clare. It is under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin and the Trustees of Sisters of St. Clare. There is a staffing compliment of 8 mainstream class teachers, 6.8 special education teachers, 4 Special Class teachers catering for pupils on the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and 13.83 Special Needs Assistants. The school is a co-educational vertical primary school located in Harold's Cross. St. Clare's has access to the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) which is resourced by the Department of Education.

## Link to Mission

This policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states:

*'We in St. Clare's aim to create an ordered and orderly environment in which children feel secure, in which self-esteem is fostered and in which children can make progress at their work'*

Therefore, we must ensure that:

All children irrespective of their special educational need are welcome in St. Clare's, are well supported, have the opportunity to participate in, and benefit from being educated in a Catholic Convent school and make progress commensurate with their ability.

## Link to Ethos

This policy reflects the Franciscan ethos of our school and in this atmosphere the spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth of the child is fostered in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare encouraging pupils and school personnel:

- to care for each other and the world around us;
- to pray and work for peace in own school, parish, world;

We treat all students fairly and apply this policy in a consistent way.

## Scope

This policy applies to all pupils attending St. Clare's Convent Primary School who have additional educational needs.

## Aims

In setting out this policy St. Clare's hopes to:

- enable students of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education;
- outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to students with special educational needs;



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- assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school;
- outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of students with special educational needs;
- establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of students with special educational needs;
- to ensure full entitlement and access for special needs students to high quality education within a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem;
- to educate students with special needs, alongside their peers within the normal curriculum of the school.
- to stimulate and maintain student curiosity, interest and enjoyment in their education;
- to enable the students to function as independently as possible through the provision of educational supports as necessary to realise that potential;
- to enable special needs students to be familiar with a body of knowledge, skills, principles and vocabulary in order for them to lead full and productive lives;
- to identify and assess students with special educational needs as early and thoroughly as is possible and necessary;
- to fully involve parents and students in the identification, assessment and delivery of special needs policy and to strive for close co-operation between all agencies concerned and for a multi-disciplinary approach to the resolution of pertinent issues;
- to meet the needs of all students who have special needs by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of all available resources;
- that a student with special educational needs should have timely and consistent access to appropriate assistive technology when required.

### **OBJECTIVES**

These objectives relate directly to the aims for special needs provision in St. Clare's Convent Primary School and are intended to show how the structures and systems that are in place actually put the aims into practice.

The Principal and staff work closely to ensure that:

- The curriculum is balanced, i.e. that it allows for and facilitates adequate development in each curricular and skill area.
- It allows for differentiation according to individual needs.
- It offers equality of opportunity and access to the different curricular and skill areas.
- The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to the student's needs.



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- There is close liaison between the class teacher and special education teachers.
- Lessons are conducted in a secure, supportive and disciplined manner. The students and the staff interact in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect.
- The teachers believe that learning takes place most effectively in the context of a caring relationship and that good teacher/student relationships foster trust and promote self-reliance and initiative.
- Teachers use a reward system, e.g. direct verbal praise, a merit or star/commendation system and/or a record of achievement. This encourages students to work to their full potential and to experience a sense of achievement.
- Older students have regular homework that has a direct relationship with their class work and a clear purpose.

## **Policy Content**

The policy informs how we identify and provide for the education of students with Special Educational Needs in St. Clare's.

The policy is laid out as follows:

1.0 Enrolment of children with special educational needs

2.0 Provision for children with emerging special educational needs.

2.1 The Continuum of Support

2.2 Consultation or referral to outside professional

2.3 Early Identification Strategies

2.4 Prevention Strategies

2.5 Personal Pupil Plans

2.6 Sensory Circuits

3.0 Inclusion

3.1 Enrolment of children with special educational needs

3.2 Inclusion of children in special classes

3.3 Children with care needs

3.4 Inclusion of Stage 2 and Stage 3 pupils



- 4.0 Differentiation
  - 5.1 Planning Differentiation
  - 5.2 Modification of Curriculum Content
  - 5.3 Differentiation by Resource
  - 5.4 Adapting Instruction
- 5.0 Deployment of Staff
- 6.0 Collaboration and Communication
  - 6.1 Special Education Meetings
  - 6.2 Involving parents and outside personnel
- 7.0 Resources
- 8.0 Transfer to Post Primary Education
- 9.0 Record Keeping
- 10.0 In Service and Professional Development
- 11.0 Reference to other Policies
- 12.0 Roles and Responsibilities
- 13.0 Success Criteria
- 14.0 Implementation and Review
- 15.0 Ratification and Communication

## **1.0 Enrolment of children with identified special educational needs**

The Board of Management will take the following legislation into consideration when coming to a decision regarding the enrolment of a special needs student:

### 1. The EPSEN Act 2004

*“A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree 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



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- b. The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated
  - c. The board will also take into account their responsibilities under the terms of the Equal Status Acts 2000, the EPSEN Act 2004, the Education Act 1998 and Admissions Act 2017.
- Where a student presents with a diagnosis of autism and/or complex needs he/she or she may be offered a place in the school's AS Class in accordance with the Admission Policy. (*refer to policy*).
  - Prior to the student's enrolment we will inform ourselves as to the student's special needs through:
    - meetings between parents, principal, class teacher, special needs staff and relevant outside agencies
    - obtaining copies of reports, assessments, SSPs, etc. from parents and/or previous educational settings where the child attended
    - liaising with the SENO
  - A decision as to what level of support will be appropriate for the student will be made following consultation with all relevant partners.
  - Prior to the student's entry, the parents and the student will be invited to visit the school.
  - Contact may be made by the Special Education Coordinator(SENCO) and/or AS class teacher within the educational settings the child has previously attended.
  - Additional resources will be accessed in consultation with the child's parents and NCSE.
  - Every effort will be made to identify and address health and safety issues.

### **2.0 Pupils with emerging Special Educational Needs**

The SEN team and relevant teachers adopt a staged approach to intervention in line with the Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support Guidelines and Circular 02/05.

If concerns remain after intervention and additional support by the class teacher and SEN team, the school may request a consultation and the assessment of the student's need from a specialist outside the school. Where this is the case, parental permission in writing will be sought.



## The Staged Approach in Identifying Students with Additional Needs

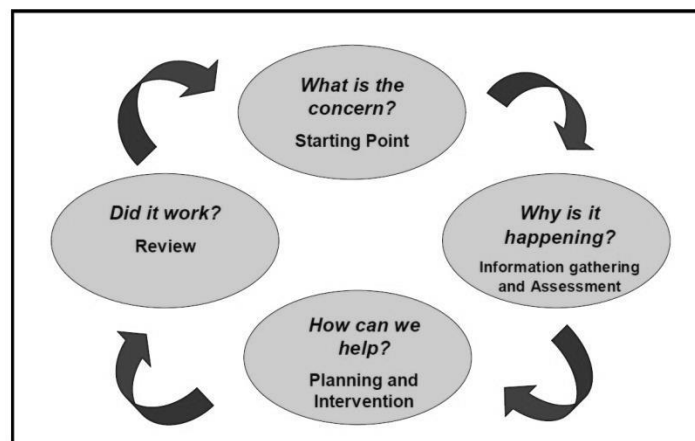
St. Clare's promotes a policy of early intervention in order to support students identified as having a need for additional support from the SEN team. Parents will be informed at all stages of any concerns teachers may have.

### 2.1 Continuum of Support

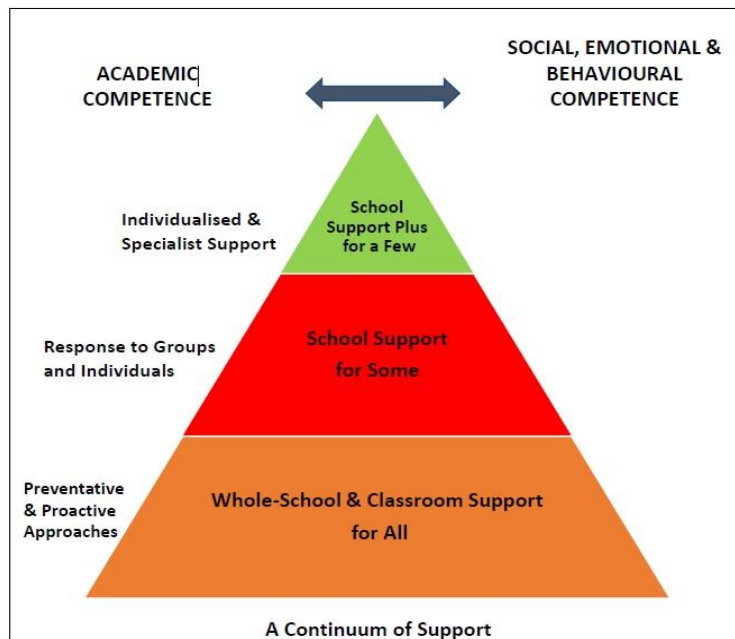
We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support students with additional needs. In accordance with the framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using the framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.



The Support suggests the following levels of support:

Continuum of

### Stage 1: Classroom Support

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for students who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other students in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual student. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

### Stage 2: School Support

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the student's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher will involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point. This involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

### Stage 3: School Support Plus

If a student's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. **School Support Plus** will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information





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from Classroom and School Support will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.

While most students' initial needs should be met through classroom based interventions, a small number of students may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the students to whom this applies will be new to the school. However, it may also apply for some students following an event which impacts significantly on them in school.

If parents refuse to give their permission for a student to engage in the Continuum of Support process, a written record of their decision, signed by parents will be kept in the student's file.

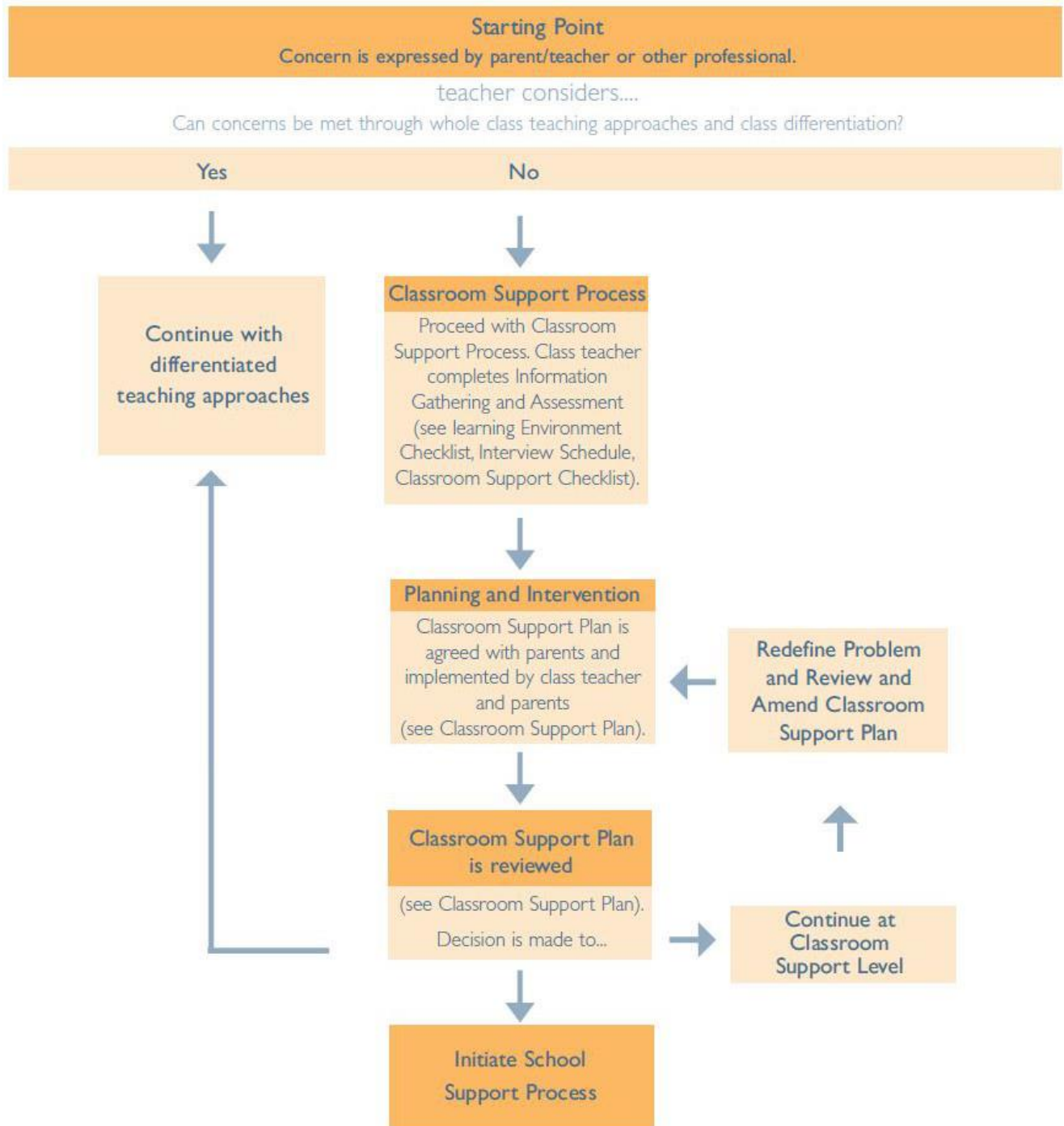
The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support students with additional needs.

A more comprehensive explanation of each stage is included in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers.

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)

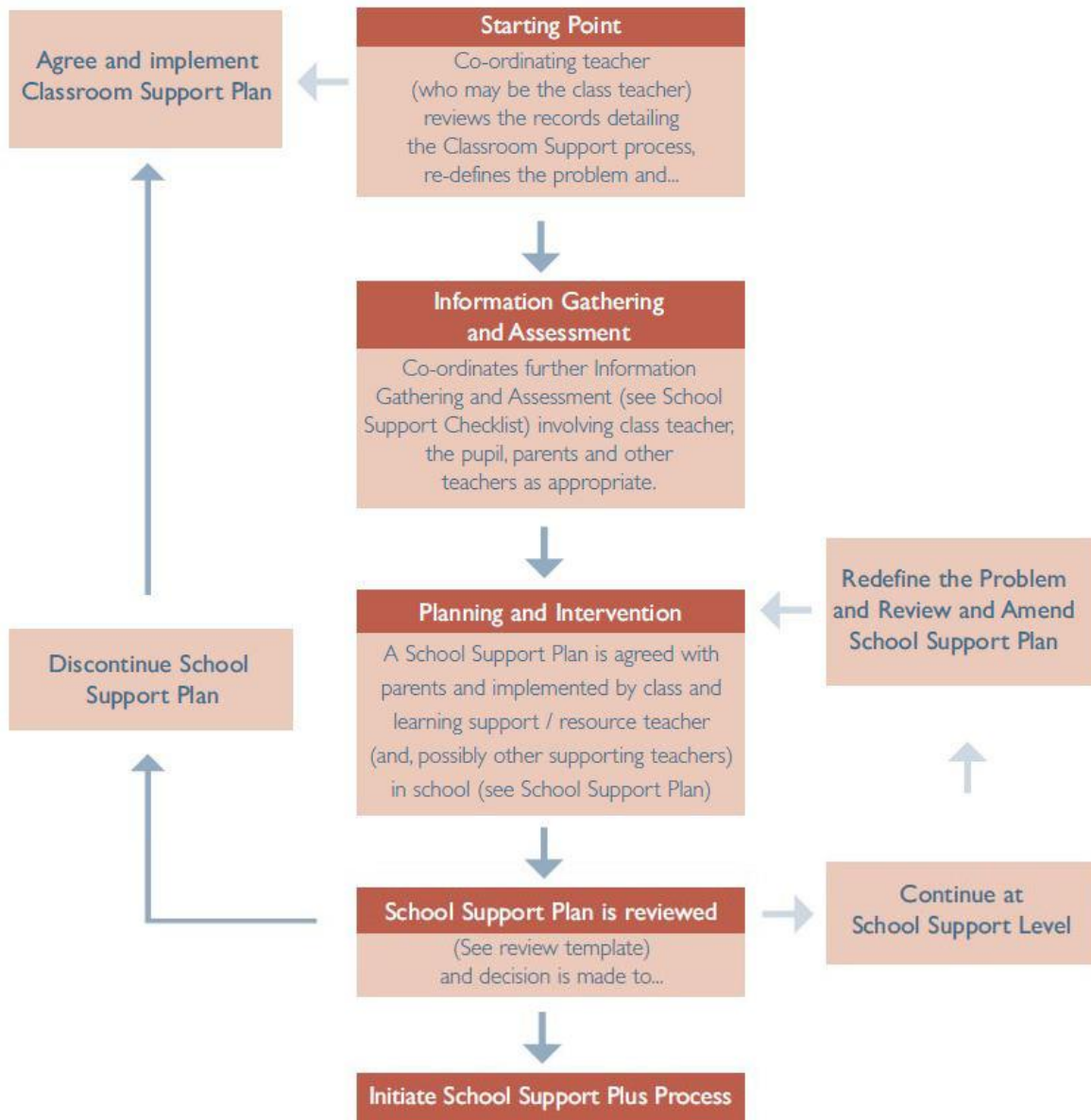


## Classroom Support



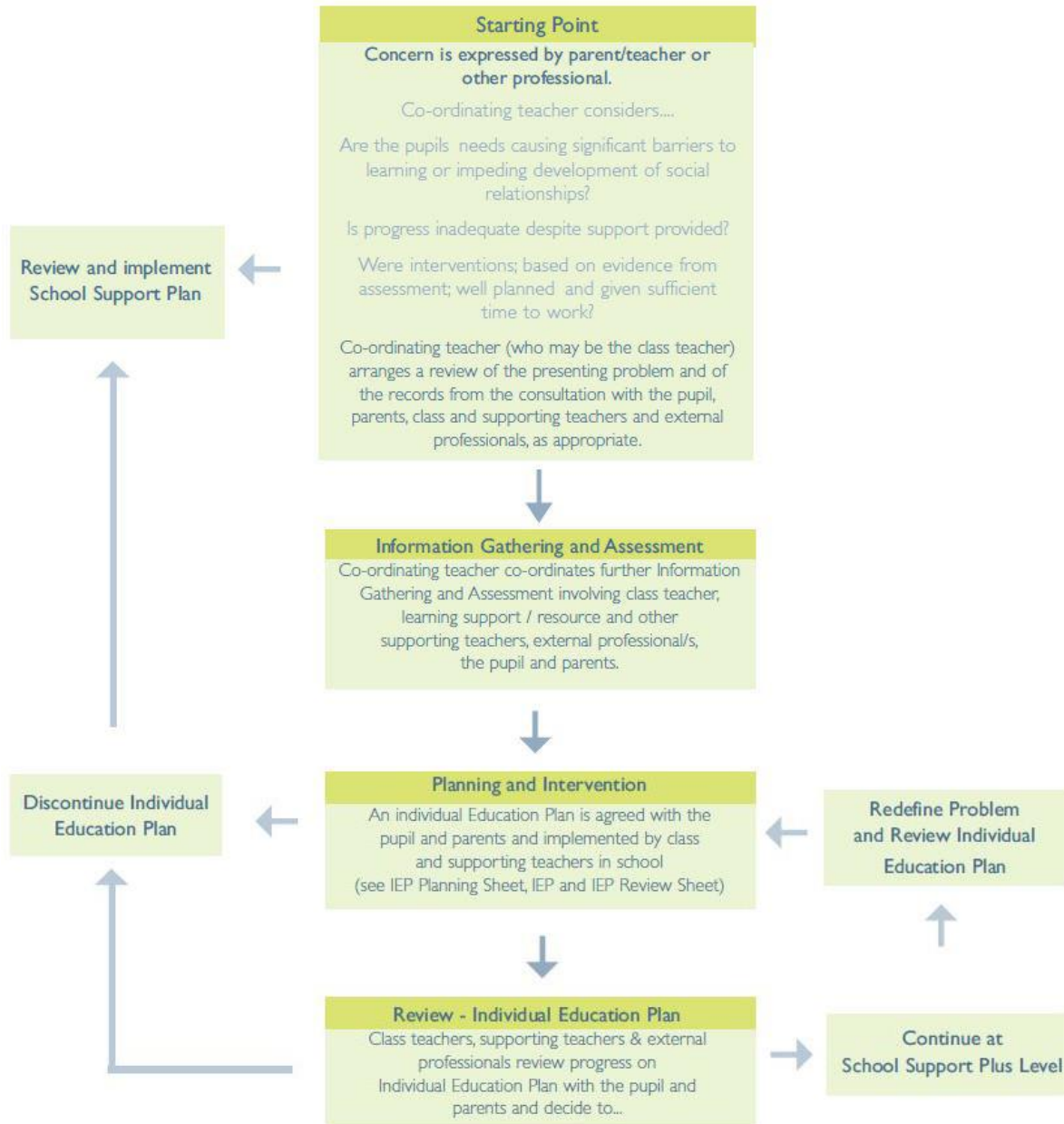


## School Support





## School Support Plus





### 2.2 Consultation or referral for assessment to outside specialist

- When a student continues to experience significant difficulties following interventions at school support level, the class teacher may request the SEN co-ordinator and/or the Principal to prioritise the student for formal consultation;
- St. Clare's may formally request a psycho-educational assessment provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), in regard to students with significant learning needs. The consent of parents is required before proceeding with a psycho-educational assessment.
- The Principal may make a referral for assessment from any of the outside agencies such as NEPS, SENO, psychologists on the SCAPA list, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and/or other.
- The Principal or the SEN co-ordinator will have responsibility for liaising with the specialist and for collecting any documentation which may be necessary.
- Assessments will usually take place in the school in a resource classroom, or another location with which the student is familiar.
- In general, assessments will be requested through the NEPS service. In the event of limited availability, the Principal will determine the priority on the basis of the greatest need. Where there are significant concerns and no possibility of a NEPS assessment, the school at its own discretion, may arrange for an assessment to be undertaken privately.
- Where parents have had assessments carried out privately, by an accredited professional, these assessments will be treated in the same manner as school commissioned assessments, when decisions are being made about deployment of staff and resources. The advice of the SENO will also be taken onto account on these occasions.
- The procedures outlined by the Department of Education, National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) will be strictly followed.
- When the assessment is complete, the parents, the Principal and/or the SEN coordinator, the class teacher and the Special Education Teacher will be informed of the results.
- In the case of a referral for a Speech and Language Assessment and/or an Occupational Assessment or a referral to the Lucena Clinic or to CAMHS, the Principal, will obtain permission from the parents and will refer in writing the student to the appropriate service.

**Should parents refuse to give their consent to have a pupil assessed, the Board of Management may apply to the Circuit Court for an order to have the student assessed.**



### 2.3 Early identification strategies

The triggers for intervention will be:

- The student makes little progress even when teaching approaches are directed at identified areas of weakness.
- The student is slow to develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- The student has social difficulties.
- The student has emotional/behavioural difficulties, which do not respond to behavioural management techniques.
- The student has physical difficulties.

Screening tests as listed below will also form the basis for identification of pupils requiring intervention:

- All Junior Infants will be screened using teacher designed checklists.
- The Early Literacy and/or BIAP is administered in May to Junior Infant pupils who are experiencing problems.
- All Senior Infant pupils will be screened using Test 2R and/or MIST.
- Drumcondra Primary Mathematics, Literacy and Spelling Tests are administered to all pupils from 1st Class to 6th every year in May followed by diagnostic testing by SEN team in June.
- The NRIT is administered to all pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> in the mainstream every second year.
- The SEN team or class teachers may administer other screeners available in the school.

### 2.4 Prevention Strategies

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

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English.
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy.
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through:
  - Attendance at the induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants and AS Junior Classes.
  - The provision of the '*Tips for Parents*' on the parent section of the school website.
  - Arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings.
  - Provision of a regular school newsletter, as well as ongoing collaboration with the Parent Association Committee.
- Implementation of Paired Reading Programme from Junior Infants to Rang 3.
- Implementation of the guided reading scheme from Junior Infants to Sixth.



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- Focus in Junior Infants & Senior Infants on Language experience approach.
- Class based early intervention by the Special education teachers in the infant classes. In Junior and Senior Infants, this will enable the identification of pupils who may be in need of focused support.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of all pupils by the class teacher.

### 2.5 Personal Pupil Plans (PPP)

In the case where a student has been identified as having a significant care need that a Special Needs Assistant has been sanctioned for, a **Personal Pupil Plan (PPP)** will be drawn up by the SET teacher in collaboration with the class teacher and the Special Needs Assistant.

The personal pupil plan will include:

- Student's name, date of birth, class, class teacher's name, resource teacher's name, SNA's name and nature of disability.
- Identify the student's primary care needs.
- Identify targets to eliminate/reduce dependence on care support.
- Contain a frequency chart and/or a running record, where appropriate.

### 2.6 Sensory Circuits

Children who are experiencing sensory regulation difficulties that impact on their learning may be referred by the class teacher to the SET team for participation in a grouped sensory circuit.

Identification of students may include:

- The child is lethargic or inattentive throughout the school day.
- The child has difficulty regulating him/herself after break times in the playground.
- The child has difficulty sustaining attention.
- The child seeks continuous movement throughout the day.

Sensory circuits take place twice daily, at the beginning of the school day and after playground time at 11am. It lasts for no longer than 15 minutes. The students are grouped according to their sensory need. The circuit is led by an SNA. Students participate in regulation exercises that may include Thera Band work, balancing exercises, hand eye coordination activities, deep pressure work.

### 3.0 Inclusion

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) 2004 states that:

*"A child with Special Educational Needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the degree or*



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*nature of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child."*

In St Clare's, we believe that inclusion is a way of thinking and behaving. We respect the unique nature of each student and aim to ensure that each student receives the opportunity to succeed to the best of their ability.

Inclusion involves a team of people - the principal, deputy principal, teachers, special needs assistants, parents, other professionals (*speech and language therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists and visiting teachers*) and students all working together to provide a learning environment which facilitates successful learning outcomes for all students including those with special educational needs.

Inclusion is enabling the individual with special educational needs to access the curriculum. This is achieved by differentiation, where teachers carefully modify, simplify and sequence curricular content.

We consider that parental involvement is a crucial element underpinning positive educational outcomes. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in the education of their child with SEN. Parents are invited to attend regular meetings to discuss how best to address their child's needs, and how together we can best support their child's learning.

Early in the school year usually in September, the special education teacher and class teacher and/or the AS Class Teacher invites the parents of each SEN students to a meeting to collaborate in the drawing up of a School Support Plan or School Support Plus Plan. At the end of the instructional term the plan is collaboratively reviewed. The time profile of a plan should be no longer than twelve months or one academic year.

**Methods used to assist SEN students to integrate into the life of the school/classroom may include where appropriate:**

- Recognition of the diversity of each student's learning style.
- Differentiating the curriculum for student with special needs.
- Developing a buddy system within the class.
- A focus on Social Personal and Health Education for all students in all classes.
- Parental involvement.
- In class support delivered by Special Education Teachers.
- Team teaching.
- Withdrawal of students for additional support classes.
- Daily collaboration between the class teacher and the special needs assistant.
- Organisation and supervision of co-operative games during playground time to include pupils with SEN and their classmates.





### **Strategies employed by class teachers to enable SEN students to participate in learning with their peers**

- Small and mixed ability group work
- Use of concrete materials
- Differentiated programmes of work
- Modification of presentation and questioning techniques to maximize the involvement of students with Special Educational Needs
- Use of a variety of teaching styles
- Use of cooperative games
- Establish buddy systems in class
- Modelling

We endeavour to ensure that each student with SEN has equality of access to and participation in all areas of the curriculum. In order to integrate students with SEN successfully all school employees need to be aware of strategies used in effective integration. This may be achieved in line with students' individual abilities, through:

- Informal conversation between the team members (the principal, deputy principal, teachers, parents, other professionals, special needs assistants and students)
- Formal team meetings
- Collaboration between the team members
- Continuous professional development of the team
- Respect each student's needs within the framework of the school's code of behaviour.

### **3.1 Enrolment of students with Special Educational Needs**

When parents initially register their child for enrolment in St Clare's they are requested to indicate if their child has an assessed educational need on the school's registration form. If parents indicate that their child has an assessed need, professional reports must be submitted by the end of February of the year of their child's entry to the school. When the reports have been submitted, the Principal meets with the parents of children with Special Educational Needs.

When a child is offered a school place, parents are encouraged to indicate if they have concerns about their child's wellbeing, if they have not already done so.

In March, prior to the child's entry to school a general introductory meeting for parents is held. Parents of a child with Special Educational Needs are invited to talk to the Principal and/or SEN coordinator.



Early in the school year parents of children with an assessed Special Educational Needs will meet with the class teacher, a member of the Special Education Team and the Special Needs Assistant, where appropriate, to share expertise and knowledge, to devise a support plan for the student.

### **3.2 Inclusion of Pupils in AS Special Classes**

Where the student has been enrolled in one of the AS classes, the student will have the opportunity to integrate into a mainstream class, where and when appropriate. The teachers of the AS Classes will liaise with the mainstream teacher to devise an appropriate programme of inclusion for that student. Every effort will be made to include the student for subjects such as Religion, SPHE, PE, Music and Visual Arts. Further inclusion possibilities will be explored with the classroom teacher. Support will be available from the AS special class teacher to ensure the successful inclusion of the student.

Opportunities for reverse inclusion will be explored by the AS Special Class teacher. These may include students from mainstream classes attending the AS class to participate in Oral Language activities, Religion, Visual Arts, Music, and or PE lessons.

Co-teaching strategies involving the special class teacher and the mainstream teacher are encouraged. The AS Special Class teachers should refer to the planning of the mainstream class teacher when undertaking their own planning.

### **3.3 Inclusion of Pupils with Care Needs**

Special Needs Assistants facilitate the inclusion of pupils with specific care needs.

### **3.4 Inclusion of Stage 2 and Stage 3 students**

For students at Stage 2 and 3 intervention level who are withdrawn for supplementary teaching; due care must be paid to the activities they will be missing from the mainstream class. Students should not be withdrawn during PE, Visual Arts, and Music etc. Efforts will be made to ensure that they do not spend an inordinate amount of time away from the mainstream class.

Co-teaching, small group strategies may be useful in this situation. Provision should be made in the class teacher's fortnightly plan to ensure that the needs of students at Stage 2 and 3 are met for the whole school day.

## **4.0 Differentiation**

The term 'differentiation' refers to the method whereby the teacher varies content, activities, methodology and resources when taking into account the range of interests, needs and experience of the students. It is a process that allows for variation in pace, amount, content, level and method of curriculum presentation to ensure that learning experiences are appropriate for all students. It is particularly important in meeting the challenges of those with special educational needs.



### 4.1 Planning 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.
- Teach the lesson, and make any necessary additional changes while teaching.
- Provide extra assistance to certain students while the lesson is in progress.
- Plan appropriate methods for assessing students' learning, based on the goals and objectives.

### 4.2 Modification of Curriculum Content

- Students with learning difficulties are required to cover less material.
- The tasks or activities they complete may be easier to accomplish.
- Exceptionally 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 ability.
- Differentiated content for homework can be used as one way of meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities.

### 4.3 Differentiation by resource

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

### 4.4 Adapting Instruction

As a result of differentiation, 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 re-teach some concepts to some students using simpler language and more examples.
- Questions asked during the lesson will be pitched at different levels of difficulty for different students.
- Closer monitoring of the work of some students will take place throughout the lesson.
- The teacher may use particular tactics to gain and maintain the interest of poorly motivated students.
- Feedback may be given in more or less detail, according to the student's needs.
- The rate at which the students are expected to work may be varied, with extra time allowed for some students to complete tasks.



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- Extension and independent work may be set for more able students and exceptionally able students.

### 5.0 Deployment of Staff

The Principal in consultation with the Special Education Team will ensure the most effective deployment of staff in meeting the overall special educational needs of students in St. Clare's as follows:

- I. Identify all the students in need of additional teaching support, including students who have special educational needs arising from high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities;
- II. Identify the level of intervention required on the basis of the student's learning needs. (Stage 2 or Stage 3);
- III. Identify the members of the teaching staff who will be allocated to the identified students;
- IV. Allocate the identified staff members to the student, taking account of:
  - ✓ The learning programme needs of individual students and groups of students, including whether it is short-term focused intervention or long-term, continuing support;
  - ✓ The time available to all students and the proportion of time needed by individual students and groups of students is based on identified needs;
  - ✓ The expertise and interest of the teachers; and
  - ✓ Practical and logistical considerations, including increasing opportunities for teachers to liaise with mainstream class teachers, availability of staff at times of greatest need, etc.
- V. Cross-reference the programme needs of students with learning needs at Stages 2 and 3, and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree on which teacher or teachers will cater for these groups.
- VI. A tracking and recording system is maintained of all students who are receiving additional teaching support and of their progress in response to the established interventions.

### 6.0 Collaboration and Communication

The Principal and the teaching staff will make every effort to facilitate collaboration between those involved in the student's education. Meetings will be arranged as necessary and supervision of classes will be arranged by the Principal where a class teacher is involved.

#### 6.1 Special Education Meetings

Whole school SEN meetings will take place twice termly. These meetings may be attended by all teaching staff, SEN Team, and/or SNA's as appropriate. The content of these meetings may include:

- Training and CPD;



- Review of current support for individual students;
- Discussion of best practice;
- Reflection and review of current practices in the school; and
- Policy review

### **6.2 Involving Parents and Outside Personnel**

- Parents are invited to meet the SEN teacher, Class Teacher and SNA, where appropriate in September and January of each year to discuss the needs of their child with special educational needs and the nature and content of the intervention.
- Parents are free at any time to make an appointment with the class teacher, SET teacher and/or the Principal to discuss any concerns they may have.
- As regards other personnel, the SEN teacher will make arrangements to meet the specialist involved to obtain and share information regarding the student, which may help the SET teacher when planning the schemes of work.
- Outside personnel, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Speech & Language Therapist may visit the school on a regular basis to provide intervention to a particular student. The SET teacher will liaise with these personnel on a regular basis and may attend the session.

### **7.0 Resources**

There is a bank of resources available for use by the teacher. Resources are generally kept in Central Resource Room areas, and/or in individual Resource classrooms. Additional resources may be acquired with the approval of the Principal.

The SEN co-ordinator has responsibility for tracking, storing and maintaining these resources. In general, these resources are for the use of the special education team, although class teachers may use them where there is a particular need.

### **8.0 Transfer to Post-Primary Education**

Sharing information about a student's learning supports their transition from primary post-primary school.

This information transfer:

- provides a rounded picture of the student's progress and achievement at primary school;
- ensures continuity and progression in learning; and
- alerts the post-primary school if additional support is needed to support learning.

Contact is made with the relevant post-primary school and/or the educational setting in order to facilitate the smooth transition for the student with special educational needs and to put in place plans to support a student experiencing difficulties around transitioning. This is done in



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consultation with the parent/guardian. The SENO may also be involved in the transfer arrangements especially with students currently enrolled in the AS classes.

In accordance with circular 45/2014, St. Clare's uses the Education Passport materials when sharing information with the post-primary school. The *Education Passport* materials include the following:

- *6th Class Report Card (standard NCCA version)*
- *My Profile sheet for children*
- *My Child's Profile sheet for parents/guardians*
- *A Special Educational Needs Summary form will be added to support the sharing of information for those children who have identified learning needs.*

The 6<sup>th</sup> *Class Report Card* includes a 'P' for 'Plan' column to enable a teacher to share information about progress made by a student with special educational needs. The 'P' signals to the post-primary school that the student had a plan to support his/her learning in 6th class. The teacher shares information about the student's progress based on the expectations identified in the plan. This approach provides clarity to the post-primary school while also enabling the teacher to use the report card to celebrate the progress made by the student in relation to the goals identified in the plan.

Parents/guardians will receive a copy of all information shared with the post-primary school.

### **Transferring Assessment Information between Schools**

In accordance with circular 56/2011 St. Clare's will send a copy of the End-of-Year Report (including the information from standardised tests) to the primary or second-level school to which a student transfers. This information will only be provided after enrolment in the primary or second-level school has been accepted and confirmed.

Legislative arrangements have been made to provide for sharing information on progress, including the results of standardised tests, where pupils transfer from one school to another.

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 (Section 28) and the (Prescribed Bodies) Regulations 2005 allow schools to share relevant information concerning a child transferring between recognised schools without breaching data protection law. (*DES Circular 56/2011*)

### **9.0. Record Keeping**

- Only one copy of each student's psychological, speech and language, occupational and/or other assessments are kept in the student's file in the safe to ensure confidentiality.
- The assessments and reports are stored in the school for a period of 9 years from once the student leaves the school.



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- The parents are furnished with a copy of the student's Support Plan.
- A copy of the support plan is kept securely in the student's file.
- The class teacher, special education teacher, SEN coordinator and Principal can access student's support plan on Aladdin. School personnel not directly involved with the student do not have access to these plans.
- Support Plans from the previous two school years are kept in the student's file in the safe. All other copies of the Support Plans held in the school will be shredded according to our data destruction policy.
- Records of progress reports, assessments and other information relating to students currently on roll will be kept in the school safe. These will be made available to teachers on request.
- On leaving the school these documents are placed in archived storage in the safe until the student has reached his/her 21st birthday, after which the data will be destroyed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.
- Records will be updated as information becomes available, by the class teacher, Special Education Teacher the SEN coordinator and/or the Principal.

### **10.0 In-Service and further professional development**

Teachers and Special Needs Assistants are encouraged to participate in NCSE training programmes and or any other in-service courses.

### **11.0 Reference to other Policies**

The following policies have a bearing on our Special Educational Needs Policy and should be referred to when reading this policy.

- Admission Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Bus Safety Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Communication with Parents Policy
- Curricular Policies for each subject
- Data Protection Policy
- Educational Trips Policy
- Healthy Eating Policy



- Health & Safety Statement
- Homework Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Policy for Exceptionally Able Pupils
- Record Keeping Policy
- Road Safety Policy
- Sensory Room Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Stay Safe Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Swimming Policy

### **12.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

St. Clare's acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community.

#### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on special needs educational provision.

The Board of Management in St. Clare's will:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the policy on Special Education Needs.
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and necessary teaching resources are provided.
- Ensure that the Special Needs Assistants receive sufficient training and have the necessary competence to undertake the duties assigned to them.
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to students in receipt of Special Educational support.

#### **Principal**

The principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the Principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school Principal will:

- 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 students.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, students and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify students' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.





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- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of students 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 (SENCO).
- Communicate with NCSE and the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser).
- Oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme.
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SEN.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

### **SEN Co-ordinator**

SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) should:

- Communicate with the Principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for students with special educational needs.
- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise students for psychological assessments.
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for students with special educational needs.
- 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 students for additional support, using the results of standardised tests.
- Select students 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 students who are receiving additional support

### **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.

The class teachers will:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all students and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- 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.



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- Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with the Principal and SEN co-ordinator to assist in the selection of students for supplementary teaching.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Gather information and assess students presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.
- Open a Student Support File once needs have been identified and require classroom support.
- Develop classroom support plans for students in receipt of Classroom Support.
- Collaborate with staff and parents to identify priority learning targets and develop school support and school support plans.
- Regularly meet with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff to review School Support and School Support Plus plans.
- Where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that students in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session.
- For each student that has a specific care need as identified in their psychological report, to collaborate with the SNA and SET in drawing up a Personal Pupil Plan(PPP).
- Contribute to record keeping such as tallies and frequency charts that pertain to eliminating or reducing the dependence on the SNA by the student for specific care needs.
- Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of students with SEN within the class to which they are assigned.

### **Special Education Teacher (SET)**

The SET teacher will:

- 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.
- Collaboratively identify learning targets and develop school support and school support plus plans for each student selected for school support teaching with class teachers, parents and other staff
- Regularly meet with class teachers and relevant staff to review support plans.
- Meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review school support, and school support plus plans.
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of students 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 regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.



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- Co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload.
- Discuss the needs and progress of students on their caseload at planning meetings.
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received.

### **Role of the Special Class Teacher (AS)**

The principal aim of the special class for students with AS is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to deliver an individualised education which meets the required needs of students diagnosed with autism and/or complex needs. The teacher will differentiate the curriculum to enable each student to achieve their full potential in the areas of social skills, life skills along with access to the Primary Curriculum.

#### *Specific Objectives of the AS Special Class Teacher*

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- Facilitate students to participate in the full curriculum at an appropriate level which caters for their specific needs.
- Enable students to become independent learners and to monitor their own learning within their own ability.
- Involve parents in supporting their child's learning.
- Increase student engagement in school.
- Promote collaboration among teachers towards future inclusion into the mainstream environment.

#### *To this end the AS class teacher will:*

- 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.
- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all students.
- 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.
- Meet with parents twice annually to collaboratively identify learning targets and develop School Support Plus plans for each student.
- Meet with parents regarding any emerging concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- For each student that has a specific care need as identified in their psychological report, to collaborate with the SNAs in drawing up a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP).
- Devise and contribute to record keeping such as tallies and frequency charts that pertain to eliminating or reducing the dependence on the SNA by the student for specific care needs.
- Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNAs in relation to the needs of students.

### **Special Needs Assistants**



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The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and under the direction of the Principal, class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN students to which they have been assigned.

The SNA will:

- Support the needs of students in effectively accessing the curriculum.
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the students.
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the school and relevant agencies
- Attend School Support Plus meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary.
- Ensure the safety of the SEN students in the playground, and be present for the duration of the playground breaks along with the teachers on duty.
- Maintain a record of support provided to their SEN student.
- Assist students at arrival and dismissal times.
- Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- Assisting the teachers in the supervision of students with special educational needs during assembly, break times and other times during the school day.
- Communicating with the class teacher and Special Education Teacher with regard to the progress and or specific requirements that may arise.
- Employing strategies as outlined in the PPP to develop independent living skills of students with particular care needs.
- Contribute to record keeping such as tallies and frequency charts that pertain to eliminating or reducing the dependence on the SNA by the student for specific care needs.

### **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 will:

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports will be provided to the school at the registration 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, SET team and/or Special AS class teacher.
- 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.

### **Students**

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



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- 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.

### 13.0 Success Criteria

The plan of work for each student is monitored on an on-going basis by the Special Education teacher in consultation with class teacher and parents. The class teacher and Special Education teacher use observation, checklists, tests and other appropriate procedures during the year to check child's progress.

The success of this policy will be measured by:

- Improved educational outcomes for students with special educational needs.
- Learning targets achieved by the student with special educational needs.
- Student functioning improved through interventions.
- Student feedback
- Inspectorate reports/Whole School Evaluations/focused SEN inspection.
- Parental feedback
- Feedback from post primary schools and or other educational second level settings.

### 14.0 Implementation and Review

This policy is an updated version of the policy drawn up in the school year 2002-2003. This revised version of the policy is effective from September 2022. This policy will be reviewed every three years and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process. The Board of Management may, however, review this policy earlier than this, if Department of Education introduces new regulations, or if the Board of Management receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. Amendments will be communicated to members of the school community.

### 16.0 Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management at a meeting on 9 June 2022. Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, parents and guardians.

**Signed:**

*Sr. Mercedes Loen*



# Special Educational Needs Policy St. Clare's Primary School

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## Chairperson Board of Management

**Dated:** 09.06.2022

**Next review: September 2025**