

St. Joseph's N.S, Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Special Educational Needs Policy

1. Introduction and Background

This policy has been formulated to provide appropriate educational intervention and support to children with learning difficulties and special educational needs within a mainstream setting. It has also been formulated to provide guidance and a reference point to all those involved in the provision of support for these children including class teachers, support teachers, SNAs and parents.

This policy was initially drafted as a cluster policy facilitated by Catherine Martin on January 17th 2002. As the post changed to a full-time permanent position in St. Joseph's NS, the policy was reviewed and amended by all staff between January and June 2008 at various monthly staff meetings. It was again reviewed in December 2010 and November 2016. It was reviewed and amended between October and December 2017 to incorporate Circular 13/2017.

2. Situation

St. Joseph's NS is a mixed rural school based in Leitrim Village. Current enrolment is 223 pupils with 95 girls and 128 boys attending (Nov 2017). These figures did increase dramatically over the last number of years. There are currently eight mainstream class teachers, Ms Kelly an administrative principal, two full time SET's, two part-time SETs, based in other schools, three SNAs and a part-time secretary. The Chairperson of the BOM is Mrs Margaret Molloy-Dunne.

3. Belief Statement

St. Joseph's NS is a co-educational Catholic primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of all children are identified and addressed.

While recognising the central role of the class teacher, a network of support, through the special education team comprising of Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants will assist the child to participate to his/her fullest potential.

St. Joseph's N.S. will encourage the involvement of parents through home/school contacts on a regular basis. St. Joseph's will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils, respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible.

The entire staff - teaching and ancillary - of the school employ a number of strategies to create an all-inclusive learning environment enabling the child to participate in the learning process with his/her peers, to experience success and to achieve their full potential within our school community. St Joseph's N.S school celebrates difference and the uniqueness of each individual in the school and the atmosphere and attitude of the entire staff is positive towards inclusion.

The entire staff employ a number of strategies to create an all-inclusive learning environment enabling the child to participate in the learning process of his/her peers.

The ethos of the school celebrates the difference and uniqueness of each individual in the school. The atmosphere and attitude of the entire staff is positive towards inclusion.

The current mission statement can be summarised as follows: "Childhood is a journey not a race". The school motto changes every year. The current motto is printed on the top of the school headed paper.

4. Rationale

This policy was devised:

- To cater for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties/ special educational needs in a mainstream setting, whether they enrol with these difficulties or if they arise during their time in this school.
- To comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills (DES) circulars.
- To streamline the provision of support within the school.
- The existing policy was in need of review.

5. Aims

- The principal aim is to optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school that reflect their overall ability and potential.
- To implement whole-school policies and approaches that target the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and the lowest achieving pupils.
- To establish early intervention programmes in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties or low achievement to participate in the full curriculum for their class level.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To create a secure learning environment in which pupils feel cared for, respected and valued.
- To offer the appropriate help and encouragement through a differentiated curriculum within the classroom, team teaching and/ or through withdrawal of a small group or individual teaching programmes (Staged Approach – A Continuum of Support).
- To promote and assist collaboration among teachers in the implementation of individual educational programmes for these pupils.
- To recognise other difficulties the pupil may have and support and assist parents in dealing with these difficulties.
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of children with special needs in the school.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with difficulties and special educational needs.

- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all partners in the education of these pupils.
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- The provision of learning support/resource hours to address pupils' special educational needs.
- The direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need
- The development of a team approach involving parents, teachers and relevant support personnel such as psychologists and speech and language therapists to provide a professional, holistic service.
- Effective communication among all participants involved

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all – the Board of Management, Principal Teacher, Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, Parents and Children. It is important that everyone contributes in the planning and implementation of our school and SEN provision.

The principal aim of SET 'is to optimize the teaching and learning process in order to enable pupils with learning difficulties and/or social and emotional difficulties to achieve proficiency in literacy and numeracy and his/her full potential emotionally and socially before leaving primary school'. (LSG: p. 15).

This support may be provided by the class teacher and/or the SET (See Appendix 1: The Staged Approach, described in Circular 02/05). The policy outlines procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with special needs.

We are committed to

- Enabling these pupils to participate fully in the school community and to develop their full potential
- Assisting these pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- Helping these pupils experience success and develop positive attitudes about school and learning
- Enabling these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- Providing supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for these pupils in English or Mathematics
- Guarding the self-esteem and self-image of the learner.
- Cultivating a supportive environment in which individual talents are enhanced, self-esteem is nurtured and positive attitudes about school and learning are developed.
- Assisting in the acquisition of the basic personal and social skills needed for life
- Involving parents in supporting their children's learning through effective parent-support and communication.
- Promoting collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for these pupils
- Establishing early intervention programmes and other programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

6.1. The Board of Management

The BOM will:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the entire School Plan.
- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on Special Educational Needs services in general.
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the special education teachers.
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of support services.

The EPSEN Act 2004 outlines the following additional roles and responsibilities of the BOM:

- Ensures that the child with special educational needs, where possible, is educated in an inclusive environment.
- Ensures that parents of a child with special educational needs are informed of their child's needs and how those needs are being met and are consulted in all significant decisions regarding their child's education.
- Ensures relevant teachers and employees of the school are aware of the special educational needs of the child and the importance of identifying special educational needs.

PARTNERSHIP

The partners in special education provision in our school are:

- B.O.M
- Principal Teacher
- Class Teachers
- Special Education Teacher (SET),
- S.N.A.s
- Parents and Pupils
- Outside agencies - NEPS, HSE, etc

6.2. The Principal Teacher

The principal teacher has overall responsibility for the school's support programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs. This includes the co-ordination of learning support and special needs services to meet the needs of pupils with diagnosed high incidence and low incidence disabilities. The principal teacher should:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focussed on the pupils with low achievement and special educational needs.
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.

- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating the services or identify a teacher to perform this role.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole – school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and / or learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special educational teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Ensure parents are aware of the process involved in applying for an Irish exemption for their child if needed and processing the finished application.

The EPSEN Act 2004 outlines the following additional roles and responsibilities to the Principal:

- Takes such measures as are practicable to meet the educational needs of a child who is not benefiting from the regular education programme provided by the school.
- If of the opinion that measures taken to meet the educational needs of the child concerned are unsuccessful, arranges for an assessment after consultation with the parents.
- Provides copy of IEP and record of staged approach to psychologist in relation to an individual child being referred for assessment.
- Causes an IEP to be prepared for the student within one month of receipt of an assessment which establishes that the child has special educational needs.
- Ensures that the parents of the child, the SENO and the other persons, as appropriate are consulted in relation to the preparation of the IEP.
- Ensures that the guidelines relating to the content of the IEP are complied with.
- Provides written notice that the plan has been prepared, together with a copy of the plan, to the parents of the child concerned, and to the SENO, should it be requested by a parent.
- May request the NCSE to prepare an IEP under certain circumstances.
- May be a member of the IEP team or may nominate a teacher to be a member of that team.
- Ensures the implementation of the IEP.
- Draws on Section 13 of the Act to ensure moneys and resources are made available for the purposes of the preparation and implementation of the IEP.
- In circumstances where a child for whom an IEP has been prepared is transferring from one school to another, the principal of the first school consults with the principal of the second school before the transfer takes place to:
 1. inform the principal of the second school of the content of the plan.

2. assist the principal of the second school in amending the plan where such an amendment is deemed necessary by the principal "having regard to the special educational needs of the student and the operation of that school".

- In cases where amendments are proposed, the principal of the second school informs the parents. Where the parents request the principal to consult with the SENO the principal shall comply with this request.
- Reviews or causes to be reviewed, the operation of each IEP at regular intervals, "but in any case not least than one year".
- Make a report on the outcomes of the review to the parents of the child concerned and to the SENO, if requested to do so.
- Where parents request a review of the IEP, the principal may accede to or refuse the request. If such a request is refused, the principal gives notice in writing of the decision and associated reasons to the parents, within two weeks of receiving the request.
- Complies with a request from the Appeals Board to review or cause to be reviewed the IEP.
- Considers the necessary provision to assist the student to continue his or her education or training on becoming an adult, including consultation with the student and parents.
- May delegate the performance of any of the functions conferred on him or her by the Act to a teacher in the school.

In conjunction with the principal teacher, the SET will:

- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and / or special educational services.
- Help to co-ordinate the caseloads / work schedules of the special education teachers.
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Liaise with external agencies to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Arrange for classroom accommodation and resources, as appropriate.

6.3. Psychologists

The school is part of the NEPS scheme and our current psychologist is Ann Conway. She is involved in the assessment of children and is included in the preparation of Individual Education Plans. She provides general advice and support to the school staff and is often consulted about individual children. The school is currently allocated two individual assessments per year.

6.4. The Special Educational Needs Organiser

Marian Flynn is the current SENO in the Leitrim area. Her role involves:

- Assigning SNA(s) to a child in the school and in what capacity.
- Liaising with those involved in writing, implementing and reviewing IEPs.
- Advising and assisting the principal and teachers in their performance of functions under the EPSEN Act 2004.

- Assisting in the transition process from primary to second level for pupils with SEN.
- Regular consultation with students and parents in relation to their options in education and training.
- Regular school visits.

6.5. Parents / Guardians

Parents, through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their own child's learning programmes, particularly in situations where the child requires additional support. Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between teachers and parents are of critical importance. In St. Joseph's NS this is done in the following ways:

- Parent / Teacher meetings.
- Discussions with class teacher if the child is not achieving specific targets within the classroom.
- Parents are given strategies to assist the child to meet these targets / achieve success.
- Discussion with special education teacher at the end of the year after standardised testing if the child has performed badly.
- Parents will give their written consent or otherwise to the additional support if being offered.
- Involvement in selection of targets when drawing up IEPs for children who are chosen for additional support work.
- The special education teacher will outline the role of the parents in their child's IEP.
- Additional notes / explanation will be given on certain strategies that will assist their child's progress and reinforce the work being done in school – shared reading programme, spelling strategies, word attack skills etc.
- Regular consultation between the parents and those involved with implementing the IEP. This may involve alteration of targets / approaches during the instructional period.
- The special education teacher may make recommendations to the parents with regards to the involvement of other agencies in their child's learning programme eg speech and language assessment, educational assessment, psychiatric assessment for ASD etc. The special education teacher can only make recommendations and assist in the application progress – the ultimate consent / application has to be made by the parents themselves.
- Parents should discuss their child's progress at the end of the instructional term and in cases where special education teaching is to be continued, they should discuss the revised learning targets and activities in their child's IEP.
- At the discontinuation of special education teaching, parents should discuss with their child's teachers how the child's future learning needs can continue to be met at school and at home.
- Parents are advised to keep a close eye on their child's progress and inform the class teacher / special education teacher if they see any stagnation / deterioration in their child's achievements.

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- Where the child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home activities (assigned homework) as outlined in their child's IPLP/ IEP.
- Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities in the early years before formal schooling begins.
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:
 - Using Information and Communications Technology (ICT), where available, to support learning in English and / or Mathematics
 - Book sharing / reading stories
 - Storytelling
 - Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
 - Discussions about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills
 - Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities outlined in their child's IPLP and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers i.e : working with child on ' Forward Together ' programme & supervision of homework.
- Talking positively about school and school work
- Availing of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and mathematics.
- Modelling involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities outlined in their child's IPLP and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Parents should keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home.

In relation to the EPSEN Act 2004, parents should :

- Notify the principal if they are of the opinion that their child has special educational needs and request him/ her to take such measures as are practicable to meet the educational needs of the child.
- Are entitled to be consulted and if they so wish, to participate in the preparation of the IEP.
- Parents are entitled to be informed and to receive a copy of the plan.
- Nominate any other person who is suitably qualified to be a member of their child's IEP team.
- Where a child is transferring from one school to another the parents may request the principal of the second school to consult with the SENO regarding proposed amendments to the IEP.
- Are entitled to a report from the principal of the outcome of a review of their child's IEP.
- May request the principal to arrange for a review of the IEP if they are satisfied that their child's targets are not being achieved.

- Where this request is refused, the parents may appeal the decision to the Appeals Board.
- May appeal to the Appeals Board against the discharge by the Council, principal or the Health Board of their duties in respect of the educational plan.
- At the discontinuation of supplementary teaching, discuss with their child's teaching how the child's future learning needs can be continuing to be met at school and at home.

6.6. Special Education Teacher

There are currently two full-time SET positions at St Joseph's N.S. There are also two visiting teachers teaching just over eleven hours, (combined total) per week in the school. They support children who previously would have been taught by the resource teacher and those who require support teaching. Their primary role in this process is as IPLP / IEP Co-ordinator for all children receiving additional support. Their key tasks in this role are to:

- Oversee the gathering of relevant information from all parties involved in the child's IPLP / IEP.
- This involves consultation with the class teacher, parents, child, SNAs, other agencies and the principal through discussions, completion of checklists, questionnaires and short meetings.
- Assist in the development of the IPLP / IEP.
- Record information about the Pupil's Profile and IPLP / IEP.
- Oversee the implementation and monitoring of the IPLP / IEP.
- Arrange for the review of the IPLP / IEP.
- Take lead responsibility in liaising with parents and with external agencies.

A sample of the Pupil Profile and IPLP / IEP currently being used in the school are outlined in the appendix.

Other roles of the SET in St. Joseph's NS:

- Maintain fortnightly plans and monthly progress reports for the children receiving additional support.
- Conduct individual diagnostic tests as appropriate.
- Administer a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of the outcomes of these assessments.
- Assist class teachers with the planning and implementing of team teaching as the opportunity for this arises in the school.
- Administration and correction of the MIST in early February each year before the mid-term break when children have completed five instructional terms in school.
- Regular consultation with parents of children who are selected for the Forward Together Programme.
- Implementation of the FT Programme in conjunction with parents.
- Storage of standardised testing materials and assisting the principal in the ordering of these.
- Informing of staff on new strategies / methodologies / resources / support agencies that are presented at various conferences / in-services during the school year and making these notes available to all.

- Arranging additional in-school visits and staff presentations by other agencies eg educational psychologist, speech and lang. therapists, school nurse, HSE personnel or SESS personnel as the need arises.
- Organise educational assessment(s) and associated paperwork.
- Regular consultation with parents and relaying of this information to other staff members as appropriate.
- Co-ordination of the list of children who will receive additional support.
- Organisation of a timetable to maximise use of time and resources with as little disruption to mainstream teaching as possible.
- Liaising with other support teachers to ensure continuity of approach.
- Provide lower achieving pupils with practical strategies for reading, spelling and problem solving.
- Setting learning targets at an appropriate level.
- Raising the child's self-esteem with use of praise when appropriate. Reporting to class teacher and parent when effort and progress has been made.
- Provide assistance commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
 - Research the pupil's specific learning difficulty, to become au fait with this impediment to learning.
 - Implement recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children in their care.
 - Development of an IPLP/ IEP for each pupil(s) who is selected for support teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents.
 - Maintaining a short term planning and progress record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of additional assistance.
 - Delivering intensive early intervention programmes in English and/or Mathematics to pupils: team-teaching in Maths & Station teaching in English.
 - Providing advice/support/resources to the Class Teacher (if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in such areas as:
 - Individual pupil assessment
 - Programme planning
 - Curriculum differentiation
 - Approaches to language development
 - Approaches to reading
 - Approaches to spelling
 - Approaches to writing
 - Approaches to Mathematics
- Meet with parents of pupils at the following times of year
 - When a new pupil is attending support.
 - Parent/Teacher Meetings (usually take place in November).

6.7. Class Teacher

The class teacher has ultimate responsibility for the implementation of a suitable programme of learning for the children in their care. This is supported by parents, SET and other school personnel. Consultation begins at Stage 1 when the class teacher tries certain

strategies / approaches to see will they assist the child who is struggling. The SET may be involved at this stage in an advisory capacity. When things move onto Stage 2 and 3, there is regular consultation between all those involved, especially in relation to the implementation of the contents of the IEP. The class teacher works hand in hand with the SET at all stages to achieve the targets outlined through a joint approach and regular consultation. (See appendix for more information on the Staged Approach).

Interventions should ensure that the pupils' needs are met for the whole school day and the class curriculum is differentiated appropriately. The class teacher should adapt learning materials where necessary. The class teacher should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. They may need to adapt their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. The class teacher should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special needs. The class teacher should ensure that every pupil has access to a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level.

6.8. The Special Needs Assistant

There are currently three SNA's assigned to the school two full-time and one Infant day hours. Their role includes the following:

- To assist the teacher in preparation and tidying up of classroom.
- To assist in implementing programmes of instruction and evaluation.
- To follow instruction and direction from the class teacher.
- To work with individual children on a one to one basis under the direction of the class teacher.
- To work with children in a group situation.
- To assist the class teacher in maintaining an atmosphere of trust, mutual respect, love, tolerance and discipline.
- To attend to children who may urinate or defecate unintentionally or follow the procedure preferred by the child's parents.
- To participate in supervising the child during breaks / lunchtime.
- To supervise the children if a teacher has cause to temporarily leave the classroom.
- To be aware of health and safety regulations.
- To use intuition at all times.
- To maintain the confidentiality and dignity of the child.
- To maintain the ethics and philosophy of the school both within and outside the premises.
- Assistance with dressing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene if necessary.
- Assisting on out of school visits, walks and similar activities.

The SNA also, as outlined in the EPSEN Act 2004:

- Share information with the SET about the child's talents, strengths and needs.
- Support the implementation of targets relating to the care and access needs of the child.

- Provide feedback which contributes to the monitoring and reviewing of the child's progress.

The SNA also records behaviour at break time using a strategy set up jointly by SNA and SET as this is an issue for the child in her care. It is also a great way to monitor behaviour and it highlights any triggers / patterns of bad behaviour that can be avoided in the future.

ROLE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

- The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.

7. Prevention Strategies

The following strategies are currently being implemented to prevent or at least alleviate learning difficulties in the school: -

- Each classroom is a print rich environment.
- Children have access to a wide selection and different types of books.
- Money is provided for the purchases of additional resources when necessary.
- The Language Experience Approach is used by the Infant teacher and the SET with all age groups and has proven to be very successful in expanding vocabulary and improving reading.
- There is ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- The MIST is administered to Senior Infants before the February midterm break.
- The Forward Together Programme is implemented by the SET in conjunction with the class teacher and parents of the children in difficulty.
- Differentiation is a strategy used with those who are experiencing difficulties egg tasks aimed at the child's ability level, different readers, less spellings, less homework etc.
- A multi-sensory approach to spelling is encouraged throughout the school with onset and rhyme a key strategy in the Junior Classes.
- SET has demonstrated to all class teachers and the children in their care a multi-sensory approach to spelling which they have engaged in daily during the first term this year.
- There is an agreed approach used throughout the school in the teaching of operations in Maths – addition, subtraction, subtraction with renaming, multiplication (to include the teaching of tables) and division (to include the teaching of tables).
- Staff have also agreed on a list of suitable vocabulary to be used in the teaching of Maths which each teacher displays as the topic is covered.
- The Staged Approach has been agreed by all staff to implement.
- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Mathematics and English to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of support in relevant early literacy, language development and mathematical skills to children who need it.

- Implementation of whole school parental involvement programmes that focus on developing children's oral language, literacy and mathematical skills.
- Implementing paired reading programmes involving adults/parents and also pupils in the school – Reading Buddy System.
- Assessment of language literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant teacher and the SET team.

8. Early Intervention Strategies

As well as those outlined above, priority is given to children experiencing difficulties in the younger classes when planning the amount and type of support to be given by the SET – whether this will be individual teaching, small group withdrawal, team-teaching, co-operative teaching or whole class teaching. When class sizes are large, team teaching of key areas is a primary consideration. The class teacher is also given as much advice and support as is possible.

9. Identification of Children Needing Supplementary / Support Teaching, Screening and Assessment

Standardised tests are administered to all children from 1st – 6th Class in the areas of English and Maths and corrected by the 31st May each academic year.

These are then discussed at the June staff meeting and agreement is reached by all concerned on who should receive additional support.

Initial Screening

Class teachers will carry out the initial screening tests. Class teachers will also correct and record results for both Drumcondra Reading and Maths standardised tests.

Diagnostic Assessment

The SET will discuss the recorded results with the staff of the school and carry out further screening tests and / or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary.

10. Selection of Pupils

A fundamental principle of supplementary teaching provision is that those pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support. See DES Circular 13/2017.

Pupils are selected for supplementary teaching in the following order: -

- First, priority is given to pupils with significant Special Educational Needs. For example, pupils with significant learning, emotional, physical and sensory needs. These pupils need additional teaching support because they require highly individualised and differentiated learning programmes that are tailored to their needs.
- Next consideration will be given to pupils who are identified as having significant needs through a process of ongoing assessment and intervention as set out in the Continuum of Support Process (DES, 2010). This will be evidenced through school-based assessment of attainment, and behavioural, social, emotional

functioning and ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes. Specific needs as set out in professional reports, where available will also be taken into consideration.

- Then pupils who were previously in receipt of supplementary teaching from a resource or learning support teacher and who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- Then pupils with mild or transient educational needs including those associated with speech and language difficulties, social or emotional problems, or co-ordination or attention control difficulties. Pupils who have specific learning disabilities.
- Then pupils who have additional literacy or language learning needs including those pupils who need additional English Language Support.
- Then children performing at or below the 20th percentile in Literacy
- This is followed by children, in the lower classes, Senior Infants to Second Class*, that are underperforming in Literacy (Early Intervention in Literacy).
- Then children scoring at or below the 20th percentile, in Maths, if resources allow.
- Finally, pupils in lower classes, Senior Infants to Second Class*, underperforming in Maths, (Early Intervention in Maths)
- *Pupils in Junior Infants will be withdrawn for support teaching from their third term in school.
- Parents are informed and written consent is obtained should they wish their child to receive additional help. If a parent declines this additional support they must notify the school, in writing, of their decision. See Appendix C

All support staff will have plenary sessions within their weekly timetable to accommodate the following duties:

- Liaising with class teachers
- Liaising with the principal
- Liaising with parents
- Liaising with outside professionals
- Researching and planning programmes for individual pupils
- Compiling resources to meet individual pupils' needs

It is imperative that planning and consultation time take place in order to plan, implement and review individual pupils' cases.

POLICY ON SCREENING, ASSESSMENT, CASELOAD, SELECTION, PERMISSIONS AND REVIEW

Initial Screening

Class Teachers will carry out assessment on an on-going basis. Class teachers will also conduct initial screening tests. They will correct and record results for MIST, both Drumcondra Maths Standardised and Drumcondra English standardised tests and Dolch Word Screening Lists, NRIT with 2nd & 5th class, carried out by SEN teacher in April/May.

Assessment Tools Used

- Teacher Observation
- Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests
- Portfolios
- Project Work Class/Homework Copies
- Standardised Tests
- Diagnostic Tests
- Discrepancies between Drumcondra Reading Test & NRIT

Standardised Tests Used

- Junior Infants –In-School Designed Assessment/letter & sound check.
- Senior Infants- M.I.S.T.
- 1st –6th - Drumcondra Maths Test
- 1st –6th - Drumcondra Reading & Comprehension test
- Drumcondra Reading/Spelling Test

Diagnostic Assessment

The SET will discuss each class's recorded results with the class teacher, and carry out further screening tests and / or diagnostic assessments where it is deemed necessary.

Diagnostic/Screening Tests Used

- M.I.S.T. (Senior Infants)
- Aston Index
- SPAR
- Schonell Word Reading Test
- Schonell Graded Spelling Test
- NRIT
- Dolch 100 Word List

Parental Permissions

As part of the General Enrolment Consent Form, parents' consent to their child attending Learning Support if deemed necessary. At the beginning of instruction, a communication will be made to inform parents of attendance and a meeting will follow. A permission slip to authorising diagnostic testing will be attached and should be returned by parent, as required in (Circular 02/05).

A copy of these permissions will be retained in the child's file.

(Please see Appendices for copy of permission letters)

11. Supplementary Teaching

- Once this is given, agreed targets are chosen and the process of formulating an IEP begins. All the necessary parties are invited to contribute to this process.
- At this stage other diagnostic testing may be carried out to determine exact difficulties that can be targeted. This may include the NARA, Aston Index or the Quest. These are administered by the SET and the results obtained are used in target planning.

- A Pupil Profile and IEP is formulated for each child receiving additional help regardless of whether they have been educationally assessed or not. Staff in the school feel this is good practice and it will eventually be mandatory anyway.
- An IEP is drawn up at least twice per year – Sept to Christmas and either January to June or January to Easter and Easter to Summer as is currently the practice. Fortnightly plans and monthly progress reports are also compiled. Parents are consulted at least once and often times more frequently, during the instructional period of the IEP.
- At the end of the instructional period, support is either discontinued or continued and a new IEP is formulated.
- Often some of the targets are not fully met and are brought forward into the next instructional period.
- At the end of each academic year, all parents of children receiving support are consulted along with any new children experiencing difficulties and the process begins again.
- At the end of the academic year, as much forward planning and preparation as possible is done for the next academic year.
- This would include groupings, timetabling, diagnostic testing and formulating of Pupil Profiles and IEPs.
- Support teaching begins the second week back in September.

12. Strategies Used in Support Teaching in English – Individual / Small Group Withdrawal.

- Each group follows an additional reading series egg 1st Class – Fuzzbuzz (1-12), 2nd Class – Magic Emerald Series (1-5), 3rd Class – Magic Emerald / C J Fallon, New Dandelion Series etc.
- Each child chooses at least one book per week as part of the shared reading programme. The Oxford Reading Tree Series books are currently being used and run from stage 1- 12. They are a graded reading series which allow the children to achieve success and gain confidence before they move up a level. Other books are available to the children and are listed in the resource appendix.
- The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is also used with all groupings.
- The PAT Programme – Introductory (1st), Level 1 (2nd) and Level 2 (3rd) are also used. Poems / nonsense poems / rhymes / jingles are also used to highlight rhyming words. The children find and colour the rhyming words so that they can see, hear and touch them.
- A multi - sensory approach to spelling. Words focussed on can come from “Spellbound” – reinforce words being taught that week in the classroom, free writing and / or dictation passages. The steps involved in this approach are outlined in Appendix 1. All staff are now aware of this approach and try to incorporate it into the teaching of spelling.
- Wordlists are widely used. These are a selection of the difficult words that children come across in their reading for that week. They are specific to each child/group with some dolch and previously taught words added in. A selection of words are given each night and at the end of the story all the words are revised and ticked as appropriate. Appendix 2 outlines the steps involved in teaching these words.

- Comprehension skills are taught in a step-by-step manner. It begins with the lower order questions of Who? Where? What? Why? When? How? And progresses onto high orders like predict, imagine, what if? Etc. Older children are taught the strategies of KWL, SQ3R.
- Sequencing is also a skill that is taught, whether it is simply pictures, then pictures and words, then pictures and sentences and finally sentences only using the framework of fist, then, next, after and in the end.
- A selection of listening and auditory discrimination activities are carried out with different groups, depending on the needs of the child(ren). This overlaps with the work of the speech and language therapist but can be very beneficial.
- Some children need strategies specific to them – structured timetabling, social skills stories, Velcro activities, oral language activities and a more visual approach. This is all dependent on the individual's needs and difficulties.
- ICT in the form of typing LEAs, fuzzbuzz activities, wordshark, certain websites eg starfall.com, daisymaths.
- Children with ASD will use Alex Kelly 'Talk about' resource book to improve their social skills and build their self-confidence.
- 'All About Me' scrapbook.

This is just a selection of the strategies currently being used and is by no means complete. The strategies used are totally dependent on the needs of the children which can change from IPLP / IEP to IPLP / IEP.

13. Strategies Used in Support Teaching of Maths – Group Withdrawal.

Current practice involves a number of strategies depending on the needs of the child:

- Drumcondra Tests are examined closely and the child's strengths, weaknesses and priority needs are recorded. This information is then used to plan a programme of work for that child or group.
- If the child is really struggling with the current classwork and it is causing them huge anxiety, then the SET will shadow the work being done by the class teacher and spend additional time on these topics.
- Each strand / strand unit are taught in a multi – sensory way using concrete materials and real-life scenarios as much as possible.

14. Record-keeping

The SET keeps the following records: -

- A daily roll.
- A fortnightly plan for each group.
- A monthly progress report for each group.
- A record of all meetings / consultations / phonecalls in relation to each child.
- A pupil profile for each child.
- A number of IPLP / IEP per academic year (2 / 3).
- A sample of the child's work at the end of each academic year.
- A copy of any assessments that have been carried out on the child forwarded by parents to the school.

15. Continuing / discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- Once children score above the 20th percentile in standardised testing and the class teacher agrees, the pupil is released from support teaching.
- Parents are informed of this and the rationale behind it.
- If they disagree strongly then their opinion must be considered and if at all possible or at a later stage in the year, their child may be accommodated with additional support.
- There is an open door policy in that if a child is signed –off and the class teacher / parent see signs of the child not coping then they are strongly advised to inform the class teacher who will in turn inform the SET who will make provision for the child again. As the SET does no longer have contact with the child the emphasis is on the parent to monitor their child's progress.

16. Monitoring Progress

Progress is monitored and recorded in a variety of ways:

- Informally through teacher observation, approach to tasks, tasks completed independently.
- Teacher designed tasks and tests – wordlists, comprehension activities, reading samples, checklists etc.
- Reference to the IPLP / IEP and drawing up new targets etc.
- Regular discussion with class teacher.
- Parent / Teacher meetings and phone calls.
- Monthly progress reports.
- Through the positive / negative attitude of the child, increase in confidence and self-esteem.
- Standardised testing at the end of the school year.

Refer to the school "Assessment Policy" for more detail on this.

17. Liaising with Parents

Parents have a crucial role to play in the education of their child, especially if the child is getting additional support. Regular liaison by the SET / CT with them is key to success. This can be done in the following ways:

- Regular and effective communication.
- Parental involvement in the IPLP / IEP process.
- Outline given of parental roles and responsibilities and an explanation of this given to them.
- Support and guidance for parents should other agencies need to become involved in their child's learning.
- Parental feedback should be sought at regular intervals.

Parents can also:

- Participate in a shared reading programme.
- Develop children's oral language skills.
- Motivate children to read more.
- Create a home environment in which literacy can thrive.

- Help children with their homework.
- Select books that interest children.
- Develop children's reasoning and problem-solving abilities.
- Develop children's mathematical knowledge.

18. Links with Outside Agencies

Links have been made with the following personnel who have been very helpful with support, advice and in the planning process:

- Speech and Language Therapist – Gráinne Rogers, Leitrim Road, Carrick-on-Shannon Tel : 071 96 55132.
- SLT for Autistic Children – Shauna Collins, details as above.
- Autism Therapist – Regina Bohan 9650300
- NEPs Psychologist Sligo – Ann Conway
- School Nurse – Leitrim Road, Carrick –on- Shannon, Tel : 071 9650311.
- SESS – Mary Rooney, Anne-Marie Byrne, Cork Education Centre, The Rectory, Western Road, Cork. Tel : 021 4254241 Fax : 021 4255647. Anthony O Gorman 097 7632488.
- SENO, Marian Flynn, Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre, 071 9623037
- Carrick Community School, Summerhill, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim. Tel: 071 9620880.
- NCSE – Declan Farrell, Trim, Co. Meath Tel : 046 9486400.
- SENO –Marion Flynn, Teacher's Centre, Carrick-on-Shannon 071 9620383.
- Marion Naughton, Popular Square, Naas, Co. Kildare. Tel : 045 883380.
- HSE Sligo – Jackie Leonard (Senior Social Worker, Child Psychiatry). Tel : 071 9174755. Bill Fox (Child Psychiatry)
- Carrick-on-Shannon Education Centre, Marymount, Carrick-on-Shannon, 071 9620383.

Again, this list is not exhaustive and may change from year to year

19. Policy Review, Ratification and Communication

This policy was last reviewed and updated in December 2017. It was presented to the Board of Management for discussion and ratification in early 2018. Once ratified all members of staff will be given a copy of this policy and it will be uploaded to the school website for all parents to view. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner should the need arise. The next review will be due in November 2019.

Appendix A

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning

Stage 1

A class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of certain pupils. The teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles for pupils in senior infants appropriate.

The class teacher should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The teacher should liaise with the child's parents to undertake extra work to support the child's learning at home. School Template attached in Appendix B.

The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate and first class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists with parental involvement. A review of child's progress should be made after 12 weeks before considering referral to learning support/ resource teacher (s).

If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the special education support team or the learning support/resource teacher in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at stage II.

Stage 2

If intervention is considered necessary at stage II, then the pupil should be referred to the learning support/resource teacher, with parents' permission, for further diagnostic testing. If this diagnostic assessment suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this should be arranged. The parents and the class teacher should be involved with the learning-support/resource teacher in drawing up the learning programme, which would include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom, and during supplementary teaching.

The learning support/resource teacher and the class teacher should review regularly, in consultation with the parents, the rate of progress of each pupil receiving supplementary teaching. If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme, then it may be necessary to provide interventions at stage III.

In the case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, it is recognised that, with serious difficulties, more urgent action may be needed. In these cases, the pupil's needs should, with parents' permission, be discussed with the relevant NEPS psychologist and/or the case should be referred to the clinical services of the Health Services Executive. This may lead to a more detailed behavioural management programme to be implemented at home and in class, or to referral for further specialist assessment (stage III).

Stage 3

Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention at stage I in the school may formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school in respect of pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems (or both) who have failed to make progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme and in respect of pupils with serious emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists.

The learning support/resource teacher and the class teacher, in consultation with the relevant specialist or specialists should then draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme. The parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This programme should be the subject of regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning programme and referral for specialist review, as necessary.

In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special educational needs, intervention at stage III will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such pupils, and primary responsibility for the pupil will remain with the class teacher, in consultation with the learning support/resource /or resource teacher.

- With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:
 - Group teaching
 - Modification of presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities.
 - Emphasis placed on oral language development
 - Provide extra tutoring in literacy and numeracy
 - Provide learning materials and activities which are suitably challenging but will also ensure success and progress
 - Set up 'buddy systems' in class
- A key role of Learning Support / Resource is a high level of consultation between the class teacher and LSRT. Central to this consultation is the development and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes.

*Appendix B
Stage 1 Documentation*

**St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village,
Roll No: 01125B**



Learning Support/Special Educational Needs:

Pupil's Name: Date of Birth: Age: Class:	Date: Review Date:
Observed Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • <p><i>See Information Attached..e.g. work samples/ further points of note....</i></p>	
Programme Plan: Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • Home <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	Observations:
Review:	

*Appendix C
Sample Letter Offer of Support Teaching*

The following letter will be on school headed paper

Date

Re: Support Teaching

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

We are planning to offer your child some additional support teaching this year. In order for this to begin parents/ guardians must sign the consent form below and return it to the school as soon as possible. Should you have any queries about this please do not hesitate to contact the principal or one of the teachers listed below at the school.

Yours sincerely,

SET

Please complete and return to the school as soon as possible

I/ We parent(s) of _____ give
our permission for our son/ daughter to receive additional support teaching in St. Joseph's
N.S.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

*Appendix D
Sample Letter Release form Support Teaching*

The following letter will be on school headed paper

Date

Re: Release of _____ from Support Teaching

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

In order to cater adequately for the specific learning needs of pupils in this school it is necessary to make changes to the supports offered to some children. Your child has received additional support teaching since ----- . Your child no longer meets Department of Education and Skills (DES) criteria for support teacher as indicated in our Special Education Policy and therefore your child will be released from support teaching the week of Monday -----.

Your child's support teacher will meet with you at parent teacher meetings on -----/ will contact you to discuss your child's progress to date.

Your child will be monitored in class by the class teacher. Should your child need additional support going forward a staged approach will be used in the school. Stage One support will be devised by the class teacher. The class teacher will be in contact with you should this be necessary. After an agreed timeframe (between 8 - 12 weeks) Stage Two support may be offered by a support teacher, should your child meet specific criteria.

Please note that our Special Education Policy is currently under review and once it has been ratified by the Board of Management it will be uploaded to our school website, www.leitrim-ns.ie.

If you have any questions in relation to the above you may telephone the school to speak with me.

Yours sincerely,

Richella Kelly,
Principal.