

Special Educational Needs Policy May 2024

Introductory Statement

Cloonakilla N.S. is updating its Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy in order to include most recent best practice in SEN and reflect on how Cloonakilla N.S. implements the revised model for allocating Special Ed. teaching supports. This policy was reviewed by the SENCO and SEN team in consultation with the Principal, class teachers and SNAs. The PCSP Guidelines provided a scaffold for this policy.

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Educational Needs:

- 6 SET
- 6 Special Needs Assistants

Guiding Principles

It is the policy of the school to accommodate children with special needs to the best of its ability including coherent and practical planning for inclusion of children with special needs allowing each child to reach the highest level of academic attainment. We want all children particularly those with complex needs to feel that they are a valued part of the School Community.

Rationale

The rationale for this policy is to ensure compliance with The Education Act (1998), The Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equal Status Act (2000), The Disability Bill (2002), the E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004), Data Protection Act 1988, 1998, 2003) and Freedom of Information Acts 1997, 2003)

Relationship to School Ethos

Cloonakilla N.S. is dedicated to the spiritual, emotional and intellectual development of each child (Mission Statement) and the SEN policy is in keeping with this.

Aims and Objectives;

- To ensure all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have opportunity to access an appropriate education.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To enable these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- To set out the whole school approach to teaching and learning re pupils with Special Needs.
- To develop a partnership with parents/carers.
- To use all resources efficiently and equitably so that these children develop as learners, engage meaningfully with the curriculum and develop the skills and competencies necessary to lead an independent life.
- To enable all pupils with complex needs

- to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible
- To support and nurture the development of exceptionally able students and to provide opportunities for enrichment and extension

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management (BOM)

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Cloonakilla N.S. that in so far as possible, and in co-operation with the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Health Executive (HSE), to integrate children with special needs into the school. Where special and exceptional requirements are deemed to be necessary, the Board will endeavour to comply, where possible, to meet these needs. The Board will ensure that all necessary accommodation and equipment are provided.

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provisions, working closely with the S.E.N. team and class teachers including

Developing inclusive whole-school policies and monitoring their implementation.

Assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including Special Ed roles.

Co-ordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provisions for all pupils.

Ensuring that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.

Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.

Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator

In consultation with the Principal, the SENCO will:

#Be responsible for the implementation and review of school policies on SEN.

#Manage a tracking system at whole school level to identify and monitor SEN provision for each level of the Continuum of Support.

#Co-ordinate the implementation of whole school procedures for the selection of pupils for School Support and School Support Plus.

#Assist or arrange assistance from SEN team for class teachers when drafting, implementing and reviewing Classroom Support Plans.

#Oversee the regular updating and record keeping of Student Support files and continuum of supports by all SET and class teacher pairings.

#Co-ordinate the case-loads and timetables of SETs and SNAs in consultation with the school principal.

#Co-ordinate review meetings, parent-teacher meetings and time for liaising with one another and class teachers to review children's progress/targets.

#Liaise with parents of children with Special Ed. needs and with external agencies- eg. NEPS, therapists, SENO etc.,.

#Support the principal with applications to NCSE/SENO for Assistive Technology applications and facilitation.

#Maintain effective links with feeder schools and where appropriate arrange meetings, hand-overs and follow-up to facilitate the transition of pupils with special educational needs.

#Identify, share and promote professional development opportunities relating to Special Ed. Teaching with SETs, class teachers and SNAs.

#Update all staff on SEN related matters and keep them informed of current best practice.

Class Teachers

Mainstream class teachers have first line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes.

Accordingly, classroom teachers plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.

Class teachers administer standardised tests in English (Drumcondra Reading and Spelling) and Mathematics (Sigma-T) at the end of the school year (1st to 6th). 1st class will also be tested in October using Micra-T and Sigma-T tests. Correction and inputting of test scores are completed by SEN team for all classes.

Pupils scoring at or below the 12th percentile will be offered Learning Support. Other children experiencing difficulties will be offered support depending on the availability of resources. Parents' permission will be requested for Learning Support.

Where a teacher or parent have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a child the school will follow these guidelines:

- The teacher should meet with parents as early as possible to pool their information about the child. Cognisance should be given to the fact that it usually a difficult time for the parents, and this meeting should be of a supportive and encouraging nature. A support file will be opened for the pupil.
- Stage 1, Classroom Support, should be implemented. The teacher should administer screening checklists and profiles for children in infants and first classes. Norm referenced tests will be administered to older children and

behavioural checklists will be used where appropriate. A plan for extra help within the normal class should be drawn up and reviewed with the parents.

- If concern remains after two school terms, the SEN team should be consulted with a view to moving on to Stage 2, School Support. The child with learning difficulties should be referred for School Support after securing parental permission. If further diagnostic tests reveal that the child would benefit from supplementary teaching an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be drawn up involving the SET, the Class Teacher and the parents. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) will co-ordinate the work of all three.

If significant concerns remain after a school term, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3, School Support Plus. With the permission of the parents, the school will formally request a consultation and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist in respect of the child's learning difficulties (mild/ moderate behavioural problems or serious emotional disturbance/ behavioural problems). Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, pediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists etc.

In consultation with the relevant specialists, the SET and class teacher should then draw up a learning plan and identify any additional available resources that are considered necessary. The parents will be fully consulted throughout this process. Regular reviews will take place with the necessary adjustments being made to the plan.

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

Cloonakilla NS has an allocation of 6 SNAs.

The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) will

- Share information about the child's talents, strengths and needs.
- Support the implementation of targets relating to the needs of the child.
- Provide feedback which will contribute to monitoring and reviewing the child's progress.

Special Education Needs Team (SEN)

The SEN team will co-operate with the staff and parents in supporting children with learning needs. They will be responsible for diagnostic testing and will develop IEP's for each child supported by supplementary teaching in consultation with class teachers and parents. Diagnostic tests administered in our school include the WIAT, BIAP, Drumcondra Reading and Spelling Tests, Sigma-T and Micra-T, Phonological Awareness Heggerty, Aston Index, N.N.R.I.T., MIST Jolly Phonics Assessment Kit, Math's Recovery Assessment Tests and Reading Recovery Observation Survey including British Ability Scales Reading Test, letter Identification of Word Writing Test, Schonell Word Reading and Spelling. The SEN Team will monitor and record progress towards achievements of learning targets.

Parents

Parents will keep the school informed about the needs of their child. They will be involved in the planning process and will support the school in the implementation of their child's IEP. Parents may request a review of their child's IEP in accordance with the EPSEN Act, 2004. School Support Plus IEPs will be signed by parents.

Children

Children where appropriate will monitor their own learning and be involved in the planning process.

External Agencies Role

Support and guidance is available to all teachers from external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, SENO, the NCSE Support Services, the Inspectorate and all allied health professionals. The SENCO in liaison with the Principal, will identify if a Psychological assessment is required and the SENCO is then responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from external agencies.

Facilities and Resources

The Mainstream School has six resource rooms. The school has ample resources for Special Needs aids which are stored in the resource rooms. The school has a Sensory Room and Sensory Garden.

Enrolment

It is the policy of the Board of Management to accommodate children with special needs to the best of its ability and in line with the Department of Education and Science rules and regulations.

Differentiation

Access to the schools broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. The class teacher will liaise with the SET and provide interventions that are additional to and different from those provided under the normal school curriculum to support those with difficulty in literacy and numeracy and those who are exceptionally able. The school makes every effort to ensure a balance between withdrawal and in-class tuition.

Early Interventions

The triggers for early intervention will be:

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

If the strategy of differentiated support does not work, the class teacher will inform the parents that their child's needs might be better served in a small group with a support teacher. The Class Teacher and the SET will differentiate the curriculum with smart targets being set. The SET will implement an educational plan for the child either as part of a small group, as part of the whole class or on an individual basis. Where progress is such that the child is no longer giving cause for concern the child will revert to the class curriculum.

The Forward Together Programme will be offered to pupils in Senior Infants and the Reading Recovery will be offered to children in Senior Infants and First Class where there are concerns around emergent literacy. At present the school has 1 fully trained Reading Recovery Teacher and places for 4-6 children on the prog.

Literacy Lift Off is implemented in both First classes from Sept. to December and in Senior Infant classes from January to June. Class teachers and SETs deliver this prog. after all children have been tested and levelled at their appropriate reading level on the PM Readers.

Individual Educational Plans

Purpose of IEP

- To focus on the particular learning needs of the child.
- To set learning targets in relation to these needs.
- To identify areas of strength in the child.
- To have ongoing assessments and re-evaluation of the child's progress.

IEP will include:

- Child's details, assessments and background information.
- Personnel involved in the development and implementation of the IEP.
- Learning strengths.
- Learning needs.
- Priority learning needs.
- Specific learning targets.
- Appropriate teaching strategies to achieve the targets.
- Suitable resources to achieve the targets.
- Home involvement.
- Review date.

There will be two instructional terms in the year – September to January and February to June. Targets will be set in September and reviewed in January. Following the January review new targets will be set. These will be reviewed in June.

The SET has responsibility for the co-ordination of the IEP. Parents and teachers participate in the preparation of the IEP. This is facilitated through meetings co-ordinated by the relevant SEN teacher. Class teachers will meet with relevant SEN teacher. Following this the SEN teacher will meet with parents. When plan has been drafted it will be signed by parent, SEN teacher and Principal (For Low Incidence pupils only). Parents will receive a copy of the IEP and a copy will be kept in the school. All reviews and IEPs for pupils will be completed on Aladdin so they are secure and only available to staff concerned. Hard copies are printed off for parents. In addition to

the online records a hard copy file will be maintained for School Support, School Support Plus and EAL pupils.

SEN Tracking Within the School

A current list of SEN Supports-Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus will be maintained by the SENCO. Each class teacher and SET will hold a copy for his/her class. In June the list of SEN Supports for the following Sept., for each class will be updated in consultation with class teacher and SEN team

A hard copy will be placed in the Assessment Folder for handover to the new teacher.

Class Tracking System

A summary of SEN interventions for each class groupings to track interventions throughout the pupils' school life. In June a hard copy will also be included in the Assessment folder for handover to new class teacher in Sept.

Inclusion

The goal of inclusion is to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that values their individuality. This school attempts to promote inclusion through:

- Modifying activities.
- Allowing all children participate in oral work.
- Allowing all children the opportunity to participate in group work.
- Providing appropriate tasks and practical work.
- Providing a supportive environment for all pupils.

Communication

The school communicates with the following as required:

- Health Service Executive.
- Special Education Needs Officer.
- Speech and Language Therapists.
- Occupational Therapists.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Social Workers.
- Visiting Teachers
- REIS

Since October 2022 Pupil Reports received from any of these bodies have been stored under the child's profile on our pupil data system Aladdin as well as the hard copy being kept in file in locked cabinet.

Timetabling – In class/withdrawal

Timetabling for Resource and Learning Support is done through a collaborative approach between SENCO, SET Teachers, Class teachers and Principal. Due recognition is taken of the specific needs of each child.

Monitoring

The school will evaluate the effectiveness of Special Needs Provision through monitoring standards reached, case samples from children, the views of parents, staff feedback and continued levels of intervention. Progress is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (teacher designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress.. A variety of assessment tools are employed-see Assessment policy.

Child Protection

In light of the Children First Act 2015 and the new Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools 2017 the following amendments were added.

If a teacher is engaged in one to one teaching with a child there will always be a glass panel in the door and the teacher will keep a table between him/her and the child.

- There will be an open door policy for pupils with complex behavioural issues.
- The SEN teachers will call to the door of classrooms to collect and return children from infants to second.

Ratification and Communication

This policy is to be circulated to:-

All teaching staff and Special Needs Assistants.

- Policy will be available to parents.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented in the school year 2024 /25

Review

The policy was reviewed in May 2024

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2024.

Chairman, Board of Management Date