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Inclusion/SEN Policy

Introduction

In St. Catherine's NS, we value the individuality of all our pupils. We are committed to giving all of our pupils every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum and have high expectations for all pupils. The achievements, opinions and wellbeing of all our pupils is important. This policy helps to ensure that this school promotes the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

Rationale

This review was deemed necessary to effectively underpin the provision of SEN support within the school under the new model introduced in 2017, and to reflect the structures already in place in St. Catherine's. This policy was last reviewed in 2006.

Acronyms in use in the policy

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychology Service
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SET	Special Education Teacher
SSP	School Support Plan

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

Enable pupils to overcome barriers in learning and become independent learners.

Enable pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Offer a tailored learning experience for every pupil with minimal risk of stigmatisation.

Cultivate an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all members of our school community.

Assist parents/guardians through discussion, support and guidance in their making informed decisions in relation to their child's access to additional support.

Establish procedures and practices to be followed in the case of additional support.

Outline the roles of all members of the school community in relation to special education.

Provide support, guidance and training in special education for all members of staff.

Establish a clear structure for record keeping.

Highlight the shared role between staff, parents and pupils in delivering some interventions.

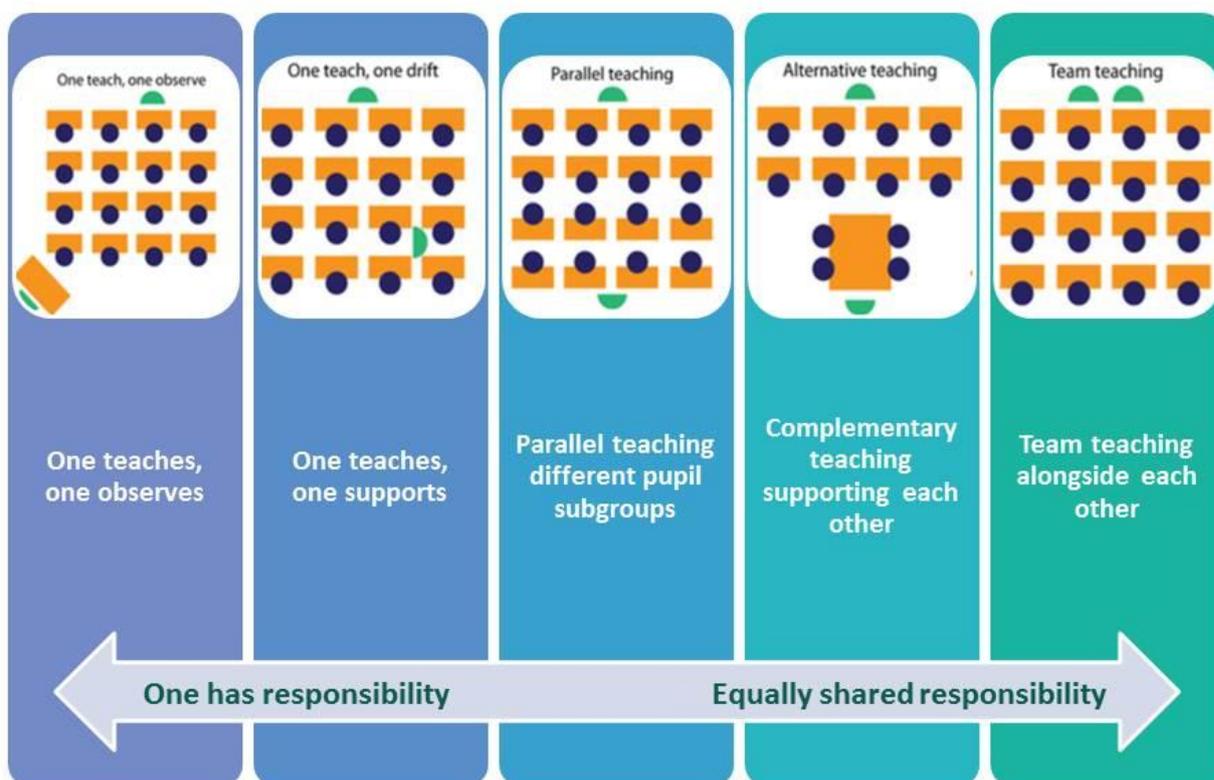
Make clear the supports available and the nature of how we support pupils in St. Catherine's NS.

Definition of Inclusion

Inclusion in our school means 'education for all'. We aim to give every child a full education to the full extent of their ability with minimal risk of stigmatisation. We do not deliver individual tuition, except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. the need to pre-teach a social concept before the group arrives, pre-teaching language before a topic or in the case of a reading intervention.

Our primary strategy for inclusion in everyday teaching is 'co-teaching'. Collaborative teaching, also known as team teaching, is a practice where two (or more) teachers work together using a variety of approaches and strategies to plan for teaching, achieve objectives with the whole class and then to evaluate the teaching and learning. It is an inclusive teaching practice, allowing students to learn alongside their peers and giving more students access to targeted teaching. Formative assessment is naturally embedded in collaborative teaching and good conversations involving teacher observations are key to best practice. Collaborative teaching reduces withdrawal support in our school. All pupils in our school have access to two teachers during literacy and numeracy time and we plan for every child to reach their full potential, to the best of their own ability.

Models for Co-teaching



The UNESCO 1994 Salamanca Statement states: “All children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students”.

Legislation

This policy is informed by current Department of Education and Skills guidelines regarding provision for the education of pupils with special education needs, circular 13/2017, and the following legislation:

Education Act (1998)

Equal Status Act (2000)

Education Welfare Act (2000)

Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004)

Provision of SEN support

It is important to note that school support can only be delivered with evidence-based interventions and within the expertise of the teaching staff. It is not a replacement for other services and agencies who can address mental health issues such as anxiety, depression or suicidal ideation. In the case of emotional wellbeing, teachers are constrained to offering evidence-based programmes grounded in CBT strategies, as offered by NEPS (National Educational Psychology Service). Parents/guardians who have a concern around their child's mental health should in the first case, consult their GP.

Interventions will be planned, timed and discussed with parents/guardians. Please see section on school support plans.

Support may be provided to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of pupils as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. Support is based on the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support. Support cannot be guaranteed on the provision of an external report or letter and is primarily provided for the difficulties experienced in the school setting.

Parents/Guardians who refuse additional support for their child must confirm this in writing.

Selection of Pupils for SEN Support

The following instruments will be utilised in selecting pupils for additional support:

Standardised tests

Diagnostic tests

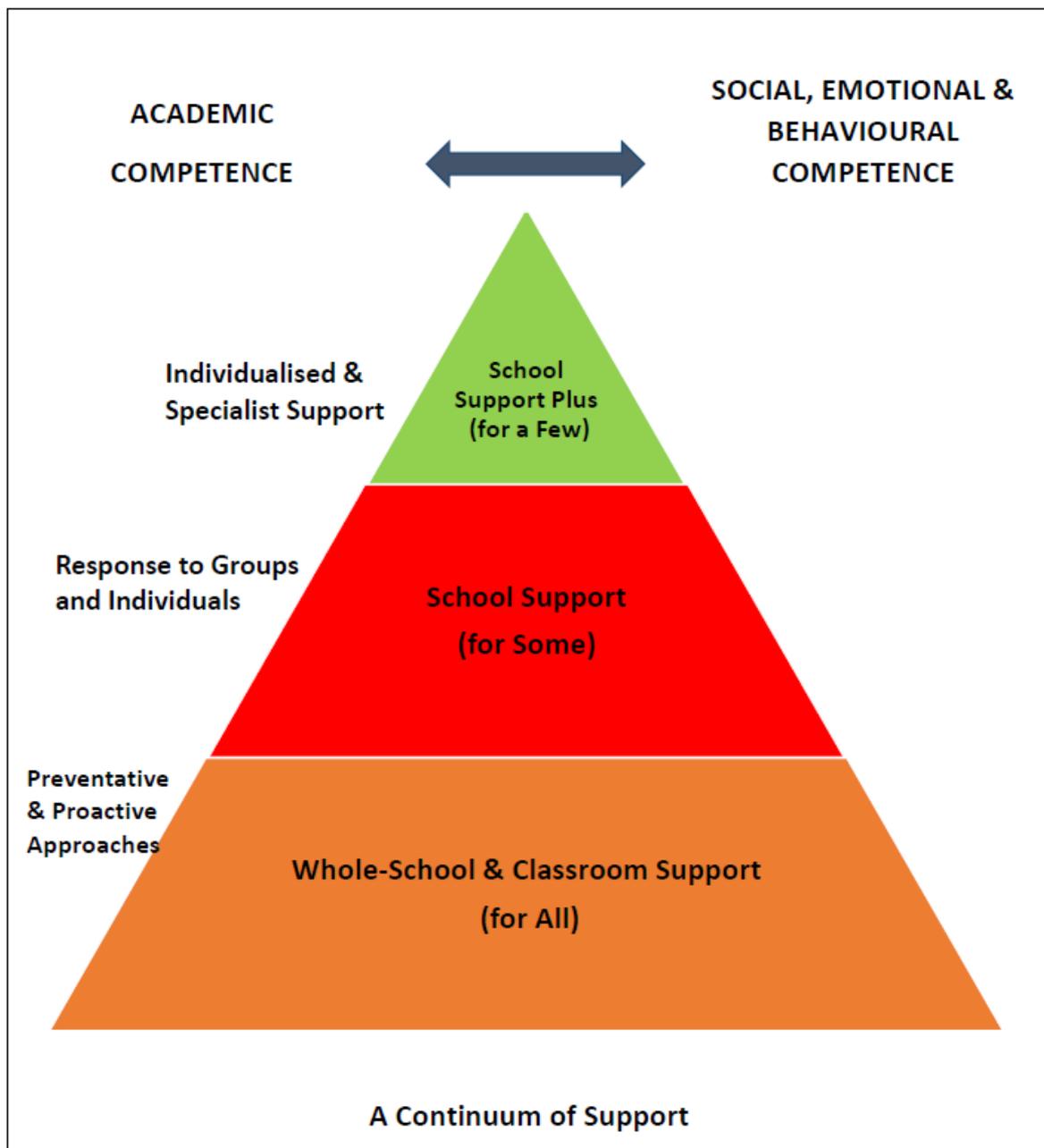
Classroom assessments

Teacher observation

Reports from relevant professionals

For targeted additional support in literacy and numeracy, we will first prioritise pupils who are at or below the 20th percentile in standardised testing

The Continuum of Support



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

There are three levels of support available. Classroom support, school support and school support plus. School support files are opened for all pupils in receipt of SEN support. The support file indicates the level of support that the pupil is receiving, as well as SMART targets, along with a date for review.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. The process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. Interventions should draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions should reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests. Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a timeframe for review.

Classroom Support:

This is an intervention carried out by the classroom teacher when classroom differentiation has not been successful. A school support file is set up for the pupil.

School Support:

This is an assessment and intervention process which is usually co-ordinated by the SET working alongside the class teacher. Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom support.

School Support Plus:

This is generally characterised by the school requesting the involvement of relevant external services in more detailed assessment and development of intervention programmes. This level of intervention is for children with complex and/or enduring needs and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions at the previous levels.

School Support Plans:

The purpose of creating an individualised education plan for a student is to ensure that their needs are being met in an individualised way. The plan will tell where the student is, where they are going and what will happen to get them there successfully. Writing targets for the student sets a focus and ensures that all stakeholders are working towards the same goals. Identifying the student's needs and placing them on the correct level of support within the continuum of support is crucial and ensures that the roles and responsibilities for each person involved are well defined. Collaborating is essential to ensure the best result for the student; seeking the voice of the student and their parents, other agencies such as primary care and NEPS, collaborating with SNAs when they are involved and other members of the SEN team along with the class teacher.

When planning targets, it must be ensured that they are SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. In the case of behaviour targets, they should follow BCC – behaviour, criteria,

condition. Targets should be conceived from evidence of the need. Assessment plays a huge role, encompassing diagnostic, screening, observation and diagnostic teaching. The picture painted by assessment and observation informs the targets set and helps to focus teaching strategies on the specific need. Planning targets on an SSP also provides a record of the student's support and shows their journey and progress. SSPs should be individualised and child centred, inclusive, holistic, collaborative and accessible.

In St. Catherine's we use an agreed format for school support plans, the NEPS template which has been adapted with our school logo and is stored on Aladdin. We capture the voice of the pupil through the 'My Thoughts About School' form which can be filled in independently by the child or with teacher support. The file includes a log of actions, checklists, My Thoughts About School, the current support plan, and the review document. One file is opened per year.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Board of Management will:

Ensure that pupils with SEN can be enrolled in the school and provide a safe and inclusive environment for them.

Provide the necessary resources to implement the Inclusion Policy.

The Principal will:

Assume overall responsibility for the implementation of the Inclusion and Additional Needs Policy.

Liaise with the NCSE, NEPS and other agencies for the benefit of pupils and staff.

Assign teachers to the special education team.

Assign one Croke Park meeting every six weeks for collaboration for co-teaching.

Develop whole school inclusive policies across all areas of school life.

Ensure that Aladdin records are up to date with reports received and any other relevant documents received in the office.

Facilitate assessment weeks in September and January.

Provide cover for class teacher and SETs to meet every month for collaborative planning.

Arrange for the exemption from the study of Irish where this is appropriate (Circular 0052/2019).

The Deputy Principal will:

Coordinate the provision of special education in St. Catherine's NS.

Schedule and chair meetings of the special education team.

Timetable the special education teachers' hours.

Provide CPD in relation to SEN annually.

Ensure that resources required are up to date and that the school is well equipped for providing interventions.

Oversee school support plans, ensuring evidence-based approaches.

Train relevant staff to use assessments, ensure that assessments are up to date and make recommendations on new assessment materials for the school.

Store confidential documents securely and make them available only to the appropriate persons with consent, e.g. class teacher, SET, NEPS psychologist.

Maintain the register of support for the school.

The Special Education Team will:

Meet on a monthly basis to discuss queries, required assessment, development of support plans and the addition to the continuum register of pupils who may need support.

Administer annual benchmarking of all pupils from 1st to 3rd class in September, and biannual for all pupils on the continuum register.

Administer diagnostic testing where required.

Administer the Gillham Basic Number Diagnostic Test with Senior Infants annually in May.

Administer annual BPVS testing to 1st class pupils in September.

Collaborate with class teachers to provide classroom support and school support within the classroom environment through team teaching.

Draw up, implement and review support plans.

Take one week in September and one week in January to review all assessment and support plans; update timetables and update the continuum register accordingly.

The Class Teacher will:

Consider how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.

Assume overall responsibility for all pupils in their class.

Liaise with parents/guardians, SET, SENCO and outside agencies for the benefit of the pupil.

Maintain records of assessment, interventions and reviews.

Use inclusive teaching practices to capture the needs of all. An example of this is to begin each topic with an Elklan language map to ensure all pupils are engaged and that a pupil is not inadvertently left out of learning due to delayed language skills.

Ensure they have read all reports and documentation pertaining to the needs of pupils in their class, request CPD if necessary, to understand and support the needs of the pupil.

Maintain the log of actions on school support plans with the SET. The log of actions includes all updates to the plan, communication and meetings with parents and external agencies.

SNAs will:

Assist in meeting the care needs of pupils assigned to them.

Work under the direction of the class teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal.

Carry out duties as specified in DES circular 0030/2014.

Make Croke Park hours available for CPD.

Maintain behaviour logs such as ABC or TOAD where necessary.

Support the school in any initiatives relating to pupils with SEN.

Work flexibly with any child assigned SNA support as timetabled, to ensure that all pupils can be supported flexibly and not create over dependence on one individual SNA.

Parents / Guardians will:

Provide information relevant to their child's progress and factors which may be affecting their learning.

Attend meetings with school staff to discuss the current school support plan and give their input to this plan. Meetings may also be required to discuss assessment, review plans or to consider ongoing support.

Where appropriate, support interventions in the home environment.

Understand the limitations of support available in a social and emotional context and seek primary care support in tandem with school support.

Attend any recommended courses, therapies or workshops provided by services they are engaging with.

Help their child to develop independence and organisation skills.

Pupils will:

Voice their concerns, strengths and difficulties with school staff.

Give their opinions and ideas for their own school support plan where possible or appropriate.

Do their best to their own ability.

Deployment of Staff for SEN:

The principal has responsibility for the deployment of staff for both mainstream and special education. In allocating teachers to the special education team, the principal will consider qualifications, experience and engagement with CPD specific to special education.

Record Keeping:

Records relating to SEN will be stored in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy. School support files are opened digitally on Aladdin Connect. A log of actions is maintained and any changes to the school support plan should be noted here. School support reviews are also completed on Aladdin Connect. All testing scores should be uploaded to the pupil's individual Aladdin Connect profile. A new school support file is opened each year if the support has been recommended to continue.

Whole School Prevention Strategies to Support all Pupils:

Our strategies for the prevention of learning difficulties include:

Team Teaching

Collaborative planning in literacy and numeracy for all classes between two teachers.

Two teachers available in the class for multiple approaches and for higher access for pupils to teaching staff.

Supportive strategies are built into the classroom environment.

Disruptive behaviour is less impactful on the learning of others.

Inclusive Strategies

We recognise the impact that the emotional state has on learning and we have committed to using emotional regulation strategies regularly throughout the day. All pupils are taught either the Lauren

Brukner or Zones of Regulation programme, depending on their class. There is more information about this in the Code of Behaviour.

We employ a range of teaching methods to engage all learning styles. Lessons are active, employ digital technologies where appropriate and always focus on language first.

Ensure the learning environment is suitable for each pupil and remain conscious of all pupils' basic needs.

Literacy Strategies

Delaying the teaching of phonics until a full phonological awareness programme has been delivered is a preventative measure against future reading and spelling difficulties.

Screening 1st class pupils with a spelling subtest in the summer term.

Benchmarking all pupils in 1st to 3rd class to their reading level, accounting for reading fluency and comprehension as well as decoding.

Elklan language maps at the beginning of each topic and worked on throughout the teaching of the topic or theme. This ensures maximum language acquisition for every pupil and provides the teacher with valuable information about the pupils' prior knowledge.

Whole school plan for explicitly teaching comprehension strategies, with one strategy assigned to each class.

Literature circles in senior classes to allow grouping of pupils to appropriate novels.

Clear, staged approach to teaching reading, with an emphasis on teaching sight words alongside phonics.

Writers' Workshop approach used for individual, tailored learning around writing.

Numeracy Strategies

Use of number talks and training for all staff around calculation strategies appeals to every type of learner.

We avoid 'teaching to the textbook' and we use active learning in every topic.

Use of Numicon for multi-sensory learning.

Flexible grouping for problem solving and active learning to ensure pupils are not stigmatised by 'streaming'.

Use of KWL and Elklan Language Maps at the start of each topic to determine pupils' knowledge and to explicitly teach the language they will be encountering.

Related Policies:

Team Teaching Policy: available in the office

Equality Policy: <https://stcatherinesns.net/policies/#1558466257599-b295ed96-044b>

Curricular Policies: available in the office

Code of Behaviour: available in the office

Success Criteria:

The school will use the following indicators to assess the success of this policy:

Progress of pupils with SEN

Feedback from teaching staff, SNAs, pupils, parents/guardians and relevant outside agencies such as NEPS and the NCSE.

Inspectors' reports

Results of assessment and standardised tests.

Ratification and Communication:

A draft of this policy was reviewed by the teaching staff in 2020.

The Draft Policy was subsequently reviewed and revised by the Board of Management at a meeting on ?? 2020.

The Policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on ?? 2020

A copy of this policy was made available to all members of staff. Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy by means of email and this policy is also included on the St Catherine's NS website at www.stcatherinesns.net

Implementation and Review:

This policy was implemented on _____ and will be reviewed every three years.

Relevant resources:

https://ncse.ie/researches/InclusiveEducationFramework_InteractiveVersion.pdf

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Model-of-Service.html>

https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/2017-03/cl0013_2017.pdf (SEN provision circular)

https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/DES%20Circular_0030_2014.pdf (SNA circular)

<https://ncca.ie/media/1351/assessment-guidelines.pdf>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – School Support Plan

(Insert here from Aladdin or NEPS)

Appendix 2 – Quick reference guide to care needs – circular 30/2014

Assistance with feeding: where a child with special needs requires adult assistance and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
Administration of medicine: where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine and where the extent of assistance required would overly disrupt normal teaching time
Assistance with toileting and general hygiene: (including catheterisation) where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet, and until such time as they are able to do so
Assistance with mobility and orientation: on an ongoing basis including assisting a child or children to access the school, the classroom, with accessing school transport (where provided, school Bus Escorts should, in the first instance, assist a child to access school transport), or helping a child to avoid hazards in or surrounding the school. (Every effort must be made by the school to provide opportunities for independence e.g. the removal of hazards.)
Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school for pupils with special needs where the school has made a robust case that 6 existing teaching resources cannot facilitate such supervision
Non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions: such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health. Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential: This may be for safety or personal care reasons, or where a child may be required to leave the class for medical reasons or due to distress on a frequent basis
Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities or sensory needs (See also section 9) and those with significant and identified social and emotional difficulties. Under the direction of the teacher, this might include assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting, supporting transition, assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.

Appendix 3 – Framework for intervention

