

Castleplunkett N.S.



Castleplunkett NS

Special Education Policy

Introduction:

This policy was initially drafted by the staff of Castleplunkett NS and reviewed during December 2023. The policy takes cognisance of directives contained in the Education Act (1998), The Learning Support Guidelines (2000), the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004) and subsequent DES circulars such as 02/05 and 07/12, and most recently 13/2027. Monitoring of this policy shall be ongoing.

School Context

Castleplunkett NS is a mixed, rural primary school in Co. Roscommon, catering for children from Junior Infants to 6th Class and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of the diocese of Elphin. Our School has two mainstream class teachers in four-class, multigrade settings, a shared SET position (Shared with St. Coman's Wood Roscommon and Kilcron NS, Ballymoe) and we are the base school for a Principal release cluster. There are currently 34 pupils enrolled in our school, a total of 25 families. Our SET post comprises of whole day teaching in the above mentioned schools, with 12.5 hours based at Castleplunkett NS, 7.5 hours in St. Coman's Wood and 5 hours in Kilcron NS.

The purpose of this policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on the organisation of provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs.

Our school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all our pupils in accordance with our mission statement, the resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management. We believe that all our children have the right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel

they are a valued part of our school community. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion.

Aims of SEN Support

Our school is committed to helping our pupils to achieve their full potential. The provision of a quality system of SEN support teaching is integral to this commitment.

Through the implementation of our SEN policy we aim to:

- support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school
- develop positive attitudes about school and learning in our children
- ensure that the Staged Approach/Continuum of Support is implemented
- optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable children with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school
- enable children to participate in the full curriculum
- support appropriate differentiation in the classroom
- support children's development both socially and emotionally
- enable children to understand themselves as learners
- involve parents in supporting their children
- promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for our pupils
- promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

Principles of SEN Support

The provision of SEN support in our school is based on the following principles:

1. Quality of teaching.
2. Effective whole-school policies.
3. Direction of resources towards children in greatest need.
4. Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Class Support/School Support/School Support Plus levels.
5. *Provision of the model(s) of intervention appropriate for the child, including the withdrawal model, in-class support model, individual or group work, etc.*

Continuum of Support – Staged Approach

Stage 1. Classroom Support

If a class teacher or parent has concerns about the academic, physical, social or emotional development of a child, the class teacher will then construct an individual plan of support to be implemented in the class setting. This plan will form the first instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be based on screening measures administered by the teacher. The plan will be reviewed after each instructional term. If the plan is working well

for the child it may be decided to continue with it. If insufficient progress is made and the child is still having difficulty, then Stage 2 (School Support) is implemented.

Stage 2. School Support

If further intervention is deemed necessary and the child is to receive supplementary teaching at School Support Level, then a letter of consent will be sent to the parents. The class teacher and Support teacher then draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the child. This plan will form the second instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support and will be implemented in conjunction with the child's Classroom Support Plan. The child's parents/guardians will be informed of this plan, invited to contribute and asked to sign it. This plan will be reviewed at the end of each instructional term and if significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to involve outside agencies such as NEPS or the HSE. (Stage 3)

Stage 3. School Support Plus

The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school in respect of children who fail to make sufficient progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme, as appropriate. Such professional advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists, occupational therapists etc. This is carried out in consultation with and with the permission of the child's parents/guardians. Following the consultation, the class teacher, Learning Support teacher, parents and outside professional (if available) will draw up a Support Plan for the child. This plan will form the third instructional page of the child's Continuum of Support. In case of children identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their entry to school. Support in the classroom will be an essential component of any learning programme devised for such children and primary responsibility for the child will remain with the class teacher in consultation with the designated SET.

Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all the school community: The Board of Management, Principal Teacher, Parents, Class Teachers, SET, Children and external bodies and agencies.

Board of Management

The Board of Management will:

- be informed of the reviewed SEN policy and any updates to it.
- ratify the SEN policy.
- ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation and teaching resources are available.
- provide for secure and confidential facilities for the storage of records relating to children in receipt of SEN support.

Principal Teacher

The Principal Teacher will have overall responsibility for the school's provision for children with SEN. The Principal keeps a record of referrals made to NEPS and other outside services.

At the beginning of each school year, the Principal meets with the NEPS psychologist to formulate a plan for the year, including assessments of pupils and professional supports for teachers. Given the school's size and situation, some of the duties associated with this responsibility are delegated to other members of staff as appropriate.

Class Teacher

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching.

The Class Teacher will-

- provide effective teaching and learning opportunities
- support the identification of learning difficulties
- provide Classroom Support/Stage 1
- log actions in the Support Plan
- communicate with parents/guardians
- draw up Classroom Support Plans
- collaborate with the SET in the development of a Support Plan for each child who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus Level on the Continuum, by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.

A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and cooperation between the Class Teacher and the SET. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of support plans. This consultation will be achieved through formal timetabling at least once per instructional term, and through informal consultation as the need arises.

Special Education Teachers (SET)

The central roles of the SET will be to

- a) support the class teacher in optimising teaching and learning opportunities
- b) provide specialised teaching to those children with identified special educational needs.

SET responsibilities will consist of both teaching and non-teaching duties.

These will include:

- Providing supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Researching the child's learning difficulty/SEN, to become familiar with their needs and their preferred learning methods.
- Being familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs.

- Developing a Support Plan for each child who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers and parents.
- Maintaining a Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of children withdrawn for support teaching.
- Maintaining a Short-Term and Progress Record (together with the Class Teacher) for in-class support.
- Administering a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments.

This will involve:

- Conducting an initial diagnostic assessment of each child who has been identified as having low achievement and/or a learning difficulty, based on results of an appropriate screening measure and record the findings of the assessment in the child's Support Plan.
- Monitoring the ongoing progress of each child in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets and short-term objectives that arise from them and recording the observations in the Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent.
- Reviewing the progress of each child at the end of an instructional term and recording it on the child's Support Plan.
 - Providing supplementary teaching in English and/or Mathematics to children who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties at School Support/School Support Plus. Supplementary teaching will also be provided for children whose social skills, gross/fine motor skills and English language skills need further development.
 - Logging actions in the Support Plan.
 - Delivering early intervention programmes.
 - Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
 - Contributing to the development of SEN policy.
 - Providing advice to the Class Teacher.
 - Meeting with parents of children who are in receipt of support teaching where a concern is ongoing.
 - Liaising with external agencies such as Speech and Language therapists and implementing suitable recommendations, wherever possible.
 - Implementing school policies on preventing learning difficulties, screening children for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments and providing supplementary teaching, where it is deemed necessary.

Role of SNA

At the time of this review, there are no pupils needing the support of an SNA. Should this change between policy review periods, the roles and responsibilities of the SNA can be found in appendix 1.

Role of Parents/Guardians

The central role of parents/guardians of children with SEN is the same as all parents/guardians, i.e. to support the work of the school and to optimise teaching and learning opportunities for their child at home.

Role of Children

The role of the child with SEN will be that of active participant in their own learning; the extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs.

Role of External Bodies and Agencies

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Early Intervention Teams, School Age Teams, Tusla, and the Inspectorate.

Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.
- Development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Careful development of phonological awareness, rhyming skills and oral language skills, before formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials as much as possible and as appropriate.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of children in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher focusing on the provision of additional individualised support, as and when required.
- Provision of additional support in language development/early literacy/early mathematical skills to children who need it.
- Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration.
- Provision of Assistive Technology as appropriate.

Early Intervention Strategies

Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class Teacher and/or the SET, in accordance with the Staged Approach (NEPS Continuum). Collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the SET, should identify children who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in

the selection of children for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support/School Support level.

Early intervention programmes will include –

- Active learning programme for all Junior Infant children with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the Aistear programme and the new Language Curriculum.
- Withdrawal of children to a support teaching room, in-class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate and if it is in a child's best interest.

When identifying and selecting children for additional teaching support, children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of supports.

Selection criteria

The following criteria will be used by our school to select children for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 13/2107).

1. Children scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Maths.
2. Children scoring at or below the 12th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Maths (to allow for a margin of error).

Note: Often in our school context, we would not need to apply the at or below the 10th/12th percentile criterion.

3. Early intervention in literacy and/or Maths - Infant class children who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
4. Children scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy and/or Maths and who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
5. Children experiencing serious difficulties with oral language or social or emotional development or application to learning, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
6. Exceptionally Able/Gifted Children. Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it. Support from Centre for Talented Youth Ireland (CTYI) is accessed as appropriate.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching.

- At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.
- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group.

Monitoring Progress

- The Support Review Record on the Continuum of Support will be completed by the SET in collaboration with the Class Teacher. This will be carried out at the end of each instructional period.
- Weekly Tests if applicable (eg. Spellings/Tables).
- Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers).
- Standardised Tests at end of year.
 - Belfield Infant Assessment Profile – Junior Infants
 - Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy – Senior Infants
 - Drumcondra Reading test (New)
 - Sigma T
 - New NRIT – 2nd Class and 5th Class
- The WIAT III is used for diagnostic literacy testing and for testing related to Irish exemptions, as deemed necessary and appropriate.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.

Record Keeping

- Class Teachers will keep a record of teacher designed tests, end of term tests and checklists in an Assessment Folder for their class.
- A file for each child in the school is kept in a locked filing cabinet in Staffroom/Office. This file contains Standardised Test booklets and any relevant correspondence relating to the child and their additional education need.
- Diagnostic Assessments are held in the SET room filing cabinet, while a copy of the summary page is added to the office/staffroom filing cabinet.
- Continuum of Support documents for Children are saved on Google drive and updated throughout the year. One hardcopy is printed at the end of the school year and stored in the office/staffroom filing cabinet.
- Psychological Reports that are active at any given time are kept in a locked cabinet in the Principal's office/staffroom. Results of Completed Standardised Tests are uploaded

to Aladdin where possible and a copy of each will be filed in the Assessment folders in the classrooms/office.

- End of Year school Report are issued to parents/guardians in June. These reports are released on and saved in Aladdin.
- The Cuntas Miosúil from the SET are stored in the filing cabinet in the office/staffroom.

Liaising with Parents/Communicating Information

- When children are identified as having difficulties in school, the Class teacher or the class teacher and SET meet with parents/guardians initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.
- Further formal meetings are held with the SET and Class Teacher to discuss a child's School Support plan and support teaching time.
- There is regular informal contact, between SET, class teachers and parents of children with additional needs.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November all children.
- An end-of-year report goes home in June each year. Opportunities to discuss this report are made available before the end of term.

Timetabling

- Supplementary teaching that children receive is in addition to their regular class programme in English and Maths, in so far as is practicable.
- Cooperative teaching approaches will be utilised, often in blocks of specified time, taking the best interests of the child's/ children's needs into account. These include;
 - Station teaching
 - Parallel teaching
 - Peer tutoring
 - Cooperative learning, team teaching
 - One teacher, one support teacher
- In relation to cooperative teaching approaches, in the context of our four stream multigrade setting, parallel instruction, is used most regularly to best differentiate and support the delivery of curriculum and differentiated instruction, taking into account the difference and need between the lower class level and the highest class level in the room. In all cooperative teaching situations, teachers work together to plan, organise, instruct and make assessments for the students, sometimes sharing the same classroom and If deemed more beneficial to the group being taught by the Support Teacher, they can be withdrawn to a quieter space.
- In so far as is practicable children should not miss out on the same curricular area each time they receive supplementary teaching.
- The Support Teaching Team will review the timetable at the end of each instructional term.

Attendance

An attendance record of children who are withdrawn to the SEN rooms will be kept by each SET.

Monitoring and Reviewing the SEN Policy

This policy will be reviewed by the staff and board of management bi-annually from the date of ratification.

SEN Policy Success Criteria

A whole school approach to the implementation of our SEN policy will:

- Ensure that children with SEN gain access to a broad, balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education.
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning among our pupils.
- Improve standards of academic performance and achievement.
- Enhance parental involvement in supporting their child's learning.
- Increase collaboration between school personnel.

The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through: feedback from teachers, children and parents/guardians; child's achievements and ongoing analysis of children's academic performance and attainment of personal targets.

Ratification:

This Policy was ratified by the chairperson of the school Board of Management.

Signed: Joseph V. Fitzmaurice Date: 28. Feb. 2024

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: Kathrina Grogan Date: 28. Feb. 2024.

Principal

Appendix 1:

Role of SNA

SNAs are a targeted support allocated to enable students with additional care needs to attend, participate and be fully included in school. SNAs should be deployed, in the first instance, to support students with the most significant and immediate additional care needs; including significant medical, physical, sensory, communication and behavioural needs.

The work of the SNA should be focused on developing students' independence, confidence and resilience and participation to the greatest extent possible in line with age and ability. Pupils should be empowered to make friendships and develop other relationships without a constant adult presence.

SNAs do not have a teaching/pedagogical role and therefore may not deliver the curriculum or participate in planning or delivery of any teaching & learning elements with curricular content. When a student with significant and complex care needs has access to support from an SNA, the SNA will work under the direction of the class teacher who has primary responsibility for the student. The SNA can provide useful assistance to the class teacher in ensuring that the student is able to access education. The role of the SNA is not to provide additional tuition. An SNA can offer insights into students' needs as they arise in school. The SNA should contribute to the Additional Care Support Targets and support the student to voice their views their plan. The SNA will also assist in monitoring the implementation and impact of the plan including documenting (via observation schedules) the progress being made in relation to the student's care needs on a day-to-day basis. When newly enrolled or existing students present with additional care needs, the school must reconfigure SNA duties to ensure that those with the highest level of need have access the greatest level of support.

The role of an SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature (Circular 0030/2014).

The primary care support tasks may include:

- Administration of medicine.
- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
- Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
- Provision of non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The secondary care support tasks may include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks; to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Care Plans for children with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the child concerned and the review of such plans.

- Assistance with maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for children including details of attendance and care needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities.
- Attending meetings with Parents, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENO); National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- Assistance with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

Allocation of SNA Support

An important aspect of the school inclusion model is that SNA supports are allocated according to identified needs, rather than being based on a diagnosis of disability.

SNAs must only be deployed to address the needs of students with additional care needs in schools. This gives our school greater autonomy and flexibility in how we allocate SNA resources, enabling the deployment of SNAs in a variety of ways to effectively meet students' needs.

In planning the deployment of SNA supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are directed to address identified needs of students. Importantly, those with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. Students may present with significant medical needs, physical needs, sensory (hearing and visual) needs, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. The level and type of support should reflect the specific goals of individual students and be informed by careful monitoring and a review of outcomes. In this way, following a period of intervention, some students may no longer require special needs assistance, some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

Timetabling of SNA supports for students with additional care needs should be flexible over time. Flexibility in terms of SNA allocation is required to allow for needs that emerge over the course of a school year.