

ST PATRICK'S JNS SKERRIES SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICIES

This Special Educational Needs Policy consists of its component policies, namely:

- St. Patrick's JNS Learning Support Policy
- St. Patrick's JNS Resource Teaching Policy
- St. Patrick's JNS Exceptionally Able Students Policy
- St. Patrick's JNS In-Class Support/Team Teaching Policy

Introduction

St Patrick's Junior School is a co-educational mainstream primary school catering for children from mixed social and cultural backgrounds. The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers and parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998. The following categories of pupils will receive supplementary teaching from the Learning Support/Resource Teacher under the terms of the General Allocation Model outlined in DES Circular 02/05:

- Pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests in English or Mathematics.
- Pupils with learning difficulties, pupils with mild social or emotional difficulties and pupils with mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties associated with identified conditions.
- Pupils who have been identified as being in the low incidence category (Appendix 1 Sp. Ed. Circular 02/05) will receive support in line with the allocation made the Special Education Needs Officer. (SENO)
- Pupils who have special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning disability).

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

- Four Learning Support/Resource Teachers (depending on allocation of Low Incidence Teaching Hours) for children with learning difficulties and Special Educational Needs.

Please note that the exemption of any child from the study of Irish in and of itself will have no effect whatsoever on provision of any learning support or resource hours for that child.

Implementation and Review

The implementation of this policy will commence February 2012. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

Ratification and Communication

These policies are published on the school website, www.stps.ie.

These policies were reviewed by staff and approved by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's J.N.S. in **September 2016**.

Signed: _____

Richard Hyland,
Chairman, Board of Management

Date: _____

LEARNING SUPPORT POLICY

The principal aim of Learning Support is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

Specific Objectives of Learning Support

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability.
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning
- Promote collaboration among teachers

Guiding Principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Effective whole-school policies
- Whole school involvement
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

Prevention Strategies

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

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development e.g. phonological awareness
- The development and implementation of an agreed whole school approach to the Maths Programme e.g. Maths Language
- Promotion of parental involvement through formal and informal Parent/Teacher meetings
- School to home information letters/notes
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in provision of additional support (Classroom Support – Stage One)
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by Class Teacher

Selection of Pupils for Learning Support

Classroom Support Plan:

- Before any pupil receives Learning Support, the classroom teacher, in consultation with the LS/R teachers, draws up a programme (Classroom Support Stage on the Continuum of Support) suitable to the pupil's needs based on their observations. A review date is set for a review of the Classroom support plan. A current copy of this plan is kept and securely stored by the classroom teacher. If the pupil is selected for School Support at the review date of the classroom plan, the classroom teacher will give the pupil's Classroom Support Plan to the Learning Support Teacher. From then on the plan is kept in the pupil's Learning Support file. The Classroom support plan informs the School support plan (IPLP) for that pupil. Templates for the Classroom support documents are available from the Learning Support Team.

The principle of Early Intervention applies.

- Junior Infant pupils are screened for possible Early Intervention with a Learning Support Teacher. Teacher observation, checklists, and perhaps an appropriate BESD document, are used to select Junior Infants for support. In the last term, the Learning Support team carry out In-School assessments, GL Reasoning 5 (Verbal and Non Verbal) and perhaps the B.I.A.P. for the purpose of selecting groups of children in most need of support (School support Stage on the Continuum). With parental consent, the selected groups of children would begin attending for learning support from the September of their Senior Infant year.
- All 1st and 2nd class children are screened annually using Micra -T and Sigma-T. The Learning Support Teachers support Class Teachers in the administration of the tests.
- Other screening tests used for selected pupils include N.R.I.T., GL Verbal and Non-verbal Reasoning and N.A.R.A.
- Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 10th Percentile, excluding, in the main, pupils who receive Resource Teaching. However depending on numbers children will be accepted into Learning Support on an ascending percentile ranking.
- In the case of pupils qualifying for Learning Support, the screening process is followed by a meeting between the Class Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil's performance and supplementary teaching is offered. Written parental consent is required before commencement of School Support (Stage 2).
- Diagnostic tests in use by the L.S. team are Quest Literacy and Numeracy Diagnostic Tests, Phonological Awareness Test 2, Jackson Phonics, Westwood Maths Checklist and various other assessments and checklists.

In the allocation of places for Learning Support at school support level, the following are prioritised:

1. Children already receiving Learning Support.
2. Children in Senior Infants who have been identified following Junior Infant screening and assessment.
3. Children in 1st class not already identified in Senior Infants at or below the 10th percentile in Standardised Tests in Literacy and Numeracy (and in ascending order depending on caseload).
4. Children in 2nd class at or below the 10th percentile in literacy and numeracy (and in ascending order depending on caseload).
5. Children presenting with difficulties in literacy in all classes depending on caseload.
6. Children presenting with difficulties in numeracy in first and second classes depending on caseload.
7. Children presenting with other learning difficulties in the professional judgement of class teacher and learning support team.

Provision of Supplementary Teaching

- The primary work of the Learning Support Teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.
- The school year will be divided into 2 instructional terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
- The maximum caseload per teacher at any one time shall be 30 pupils.

- Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency.
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the pupils.
- The Learning Support Teacher decides the size of groups, taking into account the individual needs of pupils and the overall caseload.
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective and caseload permits.

Individual Learning Programme and Group Learning Programme

The Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher meet to devise Individual Pupil Learning Programmes (IPLPs). (I.E.Ps are developed for children who have been granted access to L.I.T.H. Class teacher, L.S.R. teacher, parents and outside professionals involved with the child contribute to the development of an I.E.P.)

The individual learning plan/group learning plan will be in accordance with the criteria as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000. The plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details from Class Teacher
- Assessment results
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority learning needs
- Learning targets
- Class-based learning activities
- Supplementary support activities to include ICT
- Home support activities

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation and the keeping of planning & progress records.

A detailed review will take place at the end of each instructional term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher may meet parents to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review.

The Learning Support Teacher will maintain the following documentation

1. Individual Profile Learning Programme
2. Short term planning and programme record
3. Samples of written work
4. Assessment records

Time-tabling

The provision of learning support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths.

Efforts are made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend learning support. SNA and PE timetable are taken into account.

The provision of learning support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition. In-class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

Ideally children should not stay for more than two years in Supplementary Teaching unless they are still at or below the 10th percentile.

Following the end of instructional term review, as detailed above, a decision is made to

continue /discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching.

The criteria on which this decision is made include:

- Has the pupil achieved some/all of the learning targets set?
- Will the pupil be able to cope in the classroom learning context?

A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP.

The decision-making process will involve consultation between the Class Teacher, Learning Support Teacher and parents. Account will also be taken of the overall learning support demands in the school.

Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential.

The various strands of this system include:

- Junior Infant Pack distributed to parents of all Junior Infant pupils, containing a booklet which explains school policies and how parents and teachers can work together for the benefit of pupils. Included in the pack is a consent form to allow for diagnostic testing by the L.S team if and when necessary.
- Informing parents of concerns regarding progress in school.
- Outlining the school's practice with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures.
- Consultation between Class teacher and Learning Support teacher following a low score on a screening test
- Consultation between Principal and/or Learning Support teacher and/or Class teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval for diagnostic assessment and provision of supplementary teaching
- Ongoing communication between the LST and the class teacher
- Regular communication between the LST and parents

Referral to Out-of-school Agencies

- The LSR team co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist (N.E.P.S), Occupational Therapist (Community), Speech and Language Therapist (Community). Referral to C.A.M.H.S can only be made by the G.P. on behalf of child's parents. In the case of referral to Assessment of Need (A.O.N) the LSR teacher and the Class teacher will meet the parents and outline concerns about the child's learning difficulties and talk the parents through the A.O.N. process. It is the parents who must contact the Assessment Officer and arrange for initial interview to begin the process of Assessment of Need.
- The Principal and/or LST and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.
- The LS and class teacher complete the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- Class teachers cooperate with outside professionals' requests for questionnaires to be answered with regard to a child's behaviour pattern, or evidenced gross/ fine motor difficulties etc.
- The external professional may visit the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, class teacher and the LST as appropriate and assessment is conducted. Requested classroom observations are facilitated.
- When a copy of an Assessment report is given to the school, every effort is made to

follow the recommendations in the report.

- Where concern arises regarding the manner or speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out-of-school agency.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of our policy will be supported as follows:

Principal

- To liaise with outside agencies and professionals.
- To attend meetings between L.S. teacher, parents and/ or outside professionals.

Learning Support Teacher

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties
- Development of individual profiles and learning programmes for pupils who are selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and parents
- Secure storage of learning support / resource pupils' files in a secure location in the learning support room.
- Consult with class teacher to develop Classroom Support Plan for individual pupils as necessary.
- Maintaining weekly/fortnightly/monthly planning for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of learning support
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes to pupils in Junior Classes
- Regular meetings with parents to discuss pupil's progress
- Providing support in the development of skills in Literacy, Numeracy and other areas when they arise.
- Contributing to the development of policy at the whole school level and at the cluster level where applicable
- Liaising with class teacher on individual pupil's needs and progress
- Liaising with external agencies
- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special educational needs
- Conducting diagnostic assessment,
- Maintaining and reviewing pupil records
- Liaising with Principal, teachers and parents.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the pupils' learning needs within his / her class. Their responsibilities include:

- Making parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress
- Making a classroom support plan where necessary in consultation with LST.
- Secure storage of the classroom support plan document in the pupil's individual file which is securely kept in a locked press in the classroom.
- Complying with the school's practise with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures
- Where possible attending meetings between Learning Support Teacher and pupil's parents
- Consult and co-operate with Learning Support Teacher or Resource Teacher on

pupil's Individual Pupil Learning Plan (IPLP).

- Be alert to the possibility that some children may have a specific learning difficulty and bring it to the attention of the learning support teacher
- Modify class programmes to suit the needs of pupils
- Where there is an SNA outline their duties clearly for the instructional term

Parent

Support for and participation in their child's learning

Board of Management

Oversee implementation and review of the Learning Support policy and the provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage, within the overall budget provided for by the Department of Education and Skills.

Provision of Resources

Resources for the provision of learning support include a variety of textbooks, library books, ICT, ancillary materials, manipulatives and games, oral language development materials.

A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised tests, diagnostic screening and tests which measure reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.

Learning support resources will primarily be used in the learning support room.

The resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Team.

Success Criteria

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme.
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of learning support for individual pupils based on positive assessment results
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupils' progress.

RESOURCE TEACHING POLICY

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of effective teaching support for children experiencing a learning disability or any special needs and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

Definition of Special Needs

We understand Special Needs to be as defined in D.E.S. circulars. Interventions with pupils will be delivered in a manner that best meets the needs identified, which may be through group, individual teaching and/or classroom support.

Identification and Selection of Children with Special Needs

Concerns about children may arise in a number of ways:

- The Special Needs of some children are identified before they begin attending Primary School.
- Parents inform the principal or class teacher of a concern they have regarding their child's development.
- Teachers may have a concern regarding a child in their class.
- Concerns may arise following standardised testing.

Procedures to be followed

- Having consulted with the teacher and parents involved, the Principal and LS/R team will seek appropriate support from N.E.P.S. and/or other relevant agencies.
- In the situation where parents refuse to grant consent for their child to attend for either a psychological assessment or learning support, a record of the offer and its rejection should be kept in the child's file.
- The Education Welfare Act 2000 authorizes the Board of Management with the consent of the parent of a child to arrange for a child to be assessed as to his or her intellectual, emotional and physical development by such a person as may be determined by the Board with the concurrence of the parent.(Section 10.4)
- Where a parent refuses to give consent the Board may apply to the Circuit Court for an order that an assessment of the child be carried out. (Section 10.5)

Aims of Special Needs Teaching

The aims of the Special Needs Teaching are:

- To support as far as possible the integration of the child with special needs into the mainstream setting.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in the child.
- To promote collaboration among the staff in the implementation of the whole school policies on special needs.

Role of the Resource Teacher

The role of the resource teacher is to provide support for children with special needs by:

- Developing an individual education programme (I.E.P) for each pupil, in consultation with other partners in the child's education.

- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress.
- Setting specific time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal.
- Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class.
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, text books, I.C.T. and other related matters.
- Meeting and advising parents when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary.
- Meeting with relevant professionals in the child's interest e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists and visiting teachers.
- To seek advice and benefit from the expertise of relevant agencies, for example, the Special Education Support Service or Middletown Autism group.
- To keep abreast of research, development and recognised best practice in how best to meet the special education needs of some of our pupils.

Timetabling

- The provision of special needs teaching is in addition to regular teaching.
- Time allocated per child will depend on the demands on the service and the hours authorised by the SENO.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend except where a pupil has been exempted from a subject by the DES.
- Likewise the school will endeavour to ensure that pupils do not miss classes they particularly enjoy.

Role of the Class Teacher, Parents, Principal and Board of Management

The role of all the above in the education of children who have allocated resource teaching is as in the preceding section, i.e. the section on Learning Support.

POLICY ON EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE PUPILS.

It is the rationale of this policy to provide for the identification of the high achiever and, as far as possible, to provide for their educational needs within the class.

Aims:

- To identify each child's strengths and build on them as early as possible.
- To integrate the child as fully as possible.
- To consciously build the child's self-esteem.
- To provide the necessary resources as far as possible.

Definition:

An exceptionally able child is one who in the opinion of the class teacher performs exceptionally for their age, in one or more curricular areas.

Approach:

In keeping with the ethos of the school every effort will be made to identify, stimulate, challenge and integrate the child. This will take place in the child's normal environment, the classroom. There will be no withdrawal from class.

As a school we recognise that there are exceptionally able pupils who may also exhibit deficiencies in other areas, e.g. poor social skills, poor attention span.

In class all pupils will be encouraged to be independent learners. The class library provides an invaluable resource for private study and research. The computer is also a valuable resource within the classroom with older pupils being given duties and printing out work from the computer.

Pupils will be challenged within subject areas by being given extra work after completing the task or activity set for the whole class.

There shall be a system of pooling and sharing of resources which will cater for extra or extension material at each level.

Out of class activities.

Any information that becomes available to staff which would be of benefit or interest to the exceptionally able child shall be communicated to the parents, for example information relating to the Centre for Talented Youth, Dublin City University, will be given to parents of these children.

Parents shall be encouraged to bring their child to a suitable after school activity to suit the child's interest, e.g. music, art etc.

Relevant lessons can be used in relation to the exceptionally able child.

Progress shall be monitored by the class teacher.

The progress for review and development is done informally on an on-going basis. Formal assessment takes place in first and second class. There shall be regular consultation with the parents to ensure that the needs of the child are being provided for within the capacity of the school.

IN CLASS SUPPORT/TEAM TEACHING**Introduction**

This section of the Special Educational Needs Policy was introduced in 2016.

Junior Infants:**Familiarisation / Socialisation**

Learning support teachers provide support to classroom teachers for a number of days (usually up to two weeks) in the new Junior Infant classes at the beginning of each new school year to facilitate the new pupils' integration into primary school life.

Each learning support teacher works in the same Junior Infant classroom for the block of support. The classroom teacher and the LS teacher plan each day's activities together.

The purpose of this in-class support block is to work with the classroom teacher to

- Provide new pupils with the level of attention needed in the first days of formal schooling
- Model and teach the basic rules of the school which all of our pupils are required to follow: "kind hands, kind words, kind actions".
- Help new pupils to learn and feel comfortable with the rhythms and routines of the primary school classroom

- Help pupils begin to understand what is expected of them in the classroom and to scaffold them in meeting these expectations.
- Begin to make preliminary observations on the abilities and needs of each child in the class with a view to planning an appropriately differentiated scheme of work for the year.

Aistear

Learning Support teachers provide in-class support in each Junior Infant classroom during Aistear time during the first instructional term (October - February) in order to support the use of play-based methodologies in the Junior Infant classroom in the earliest part of the year.

Senior Infants:

Numeracy / Numicon:

Learning Support teachers introduce and model the Numicon programme as a structured teaching apparatus in the teaching of number in Senior Infant classes for a number of weeks during the second instructional term each year.

First & Second Class:

Numeracy:

Learning support teachers will collaborate with classroom teachers in teaching number facts to improve pupils' automaticity and accuracy in computation.

Implementation

- It is intended that each class in the school will receive in-class support during the school year.
- In-class support/team teaching sessions are timetabled. In general, in-class support in a particular classroom will replace withdrawal of any individuals from that classroom for the duration of the in-class support block. There may be exceptions to this practice.
- Prior to commencement of in-class support, the LSR teacher and the classroom teacher will meet in order to plan content to be taught during the block of in-class support.
- Whole school needs and whole class strengths and weaknesses, as evidenced by results of standardised tests in maths and reading, are cross referenced with the IPLPs and/or IEPs of individuals in each class in order to give focus to the programme of work for the block of in-class support.
 - Realistic goals/targets are set for the programme
 - Methods of assessing these targets are identified
 - Methods of monitoring & evaluating the programme are identified
 - A date for evaluation of the programme is set.
- The model of support used in each classroom will depend on the needs of pupils in that class, for instance:
 - Same content/different content
 - Whole class/group work
 - Equal responsibility/one teacher leading & one supporting

- Types of groupings are established, e.g.
 - Same ability
 - Mixed ability
 - Specific target

- Preparatory work is evenly shared between the class teacher and the learning support teacher
- Classroom rules and protocols are shared
- Responsibility for discipline & classroom management is established
- Responsibility for record keeping and assessment is established
- Responsibility for communication with other staff and parents is established
- During the block of in-class support the class teacher and the learning support teacher will meet as necessary to update or refine plans in the light of previous in-class sessions.
- At the conclusion of the block the teachers will agree a report which will be included in both teachers' cúntas míosiúil.