



# St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN

K34 D799

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín  
Deputy Principal: Gráinne Connolly

Roll Number: 16333Q

RCN: 20118839

## Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

### 1. Context

St. Patrick's JNS school caters for children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class and is under the patronage of Archdiocese of Dublin.

The school currently has a Principal, 12 mainstream class teachers, 3 Special Education teachers, and an Autism Class Teacher.

The school has Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). The allocation of both Special Education teachers (SETs) and Special Needs Assistants is subject to review.

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

The term special educational needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills, children with difficulties with fine or gross motor skills, children who have English as an additional language (if that impacts on their progress) and children who have additional diagnosed needs. In this document, SEN can be taken to mean special educational needs in this broad sense.

### 2. 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
- 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
- include student/learner voice in their learning
- involve parents in supporting their children
- promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for our pupils



Tel/Fax: 01 8490836



[admin@stps.ie](mailto:admin@stps.ie) [www.stps.ie](http://www.stps.ie)



- promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.

### **3. 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 normal class setting. This plan will be part of the child's SSF (School Support File) and will be based on teacher observations or assessments. The plan will be reviewed after each instructional term (using the Review Page from the Continuum of Support document). 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. If concerns have been resolved, the Classroom Support plan can be closed.

#### *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 by the SET in question. The class teacher and Support teacher then draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the child. This plan will be part of the child's SSF (School Support File) 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. School Support Plus*

Children whose special educational needs are addressed at the level of School Support Plus are those with the greatest level of need. This may include children whose needs have been identified as significant and enduring, and those who have not responded to intervention as expected at the level of School Support. This plan will be part of the child's SSF (School Support File). In case of children identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at School Support Plus 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 Support teacher.

Note: The 'Log of Actions' in the SSF will be added to as appropriate (after a decision has been made or a meeting held). These additions will be made by the Class Teacher or the Support teacher, as appropriate.

#### **4. 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, SETs, SNAs, 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 facilities for the storage of records both physical and electronic, 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 distributed to the Deputy Principal and other members of staff as appropriate.

##### **Class Teacher**

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. (Guidelines 2017)

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 (Continuum of Support) "Interventions with children at School Support and School Support Plus should include a classroom support plan to ensure that the children's needs are met for the whole school day" (Guidelines 2017 p7)
- collaborate with the Support Teacher 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.

Key to 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 and

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, parents, the child and where relevant the SNA.
- Maintaining a Short-Term Plan for each individual or group of children withdrawn for support teaching. Maintaining a Short-Term Plan (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.
- 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 (as per selection criteria). Supplementary teaching will also be provided for children whose PSED, literacy, numeracy, motor development and communication and language skills need 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 (if requested).
- Meeting parents of children who are in receipt of support teaching.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc., 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.

### **Autism Class Teacher**

The Autism Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all children in his/her class. The teacher will liaise with other teachers, parents and outside professionals to provide an education which meets the additional needs of the children in their class.

This will involve:

- Being the main point of contact for the child's parents/guardians
- Consulting with parents on the development and review of School Support Plans
- Planning and implementing the targets in the school support plans
- Coordinating the daily timetable/routine of those SNAs assigned temporarily or permanently to the Autism class
- Consulting with mainstream class teachers to arrange suitable integration or reverse integration for Autism class pupils where appropriate

### **Role of SNA**

SNAs are a resource allocated to schools to be deployed by the principal to assist children with additional care needs. The principal may redeploy SNAs to address the needs of other children in the school, where necessary. SNAs are not allocated to individual children. 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 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.

### **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, Túsla, Visiting Teachers for children with vision impairment, Visiting Teachers for children with hearing loss, and the Inspectorate.

We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. We also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

## **5. Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies**

- The use of universal design for learning as an approach to differentiation 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 who need further development of their social/emotional and/or concentration needs
- Provision of Assistive Technology as appropriate.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings.

### **Early Intervention Strategies**

Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class Teacher and/or the SET, in accordance with the Staged Approach (Continuum of Support). Collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the SETs 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 –

- Implementation of an English language programme for Junior Infant and Senior Infant children who have English as an additional language, with emphasis on basic vocabulary. Intensive language programme for such children in more senior classes with emphasis on basic vocabulary and the language of Maths. This acknowledges the literacy skills already acquired in mother tongue.
- 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.
- Early intervention in-class literacy support programme in Junior Infant Classes.
- Early intervention literacy support programme (Explicit systematic and sequential approach to literacy) for select children in Senior Infant to 2nd classes.
- Early intervention numeracy support programme in First and Second classes.
- 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.

## **6. 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 64/2024).

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).
- 3 Children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and whose English needs further support.
4. 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 level of the Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
5. 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 Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
6. 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 Continuum of Support. The class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded the interventions in it.
7. Transition to Senior School.
8. Exceptionally Able/Gifted Children. Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support 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.

## **7. 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.

## **8. Monitoring Progress**

- The Support Review 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. The completed review will be saved in the child's SSF.
- Termly Assessments if applicable (teacher designed or from publishers).
- Standardised Tests at end of year (1st & 2nd) English and Maths.
- End of Senior Infant/Beginning of First Class Screening Assessments (DTEL-S & DTEN-S).
- 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.

## **9. 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 class is kept on Databiz and a hard copy in a locked filing cabinet in the classroom and passed on from teacher to teacher as the child moves through the school.
- Diagnostic Assessments and other checklists administered by the SET will be part of the child's file in the SET's room.
- Continuum of Support documents and review documents for children with SEN are stored in the child's SSF on Databiz Solutions.
- Pupil Care Plans for children with SNA access will also be saved in the child's SSF on Databiz Solutions.
- Psychological Reports, OT reports and SP &L reports that are active at any given time are kept in a locked cabinet in the principal's office. Copies may be held by the SENCO in a locked cabinet. These reports will also be saved in the child's SSF on Databiz Solutions.
- Results of Completed Standardised Tests will be uploaded to Databiz solutions. The Standardised Tests currently used in our school are – Drumcondra Reading and Maths.
- End of Year school Report will be issued to parents/guardians in June. These reports are saved on Databiz Solutions.

- Cúntas Míósúil from the SET will be sent to the Deputy Principal. These reports outline the work undertaken by the support Teacher with groups or individual children.

#### **10. Liaising with Parents/Communicating Information**

- Class teacher meets with parents/guardians initially to discuss concerns and outline supports available in the school.
- SET and Class Teacher meet with parents to agree a School Support Plan for the child.
- SET liaises with parents of children in receipt of supplementary teaching to demonstrate methodologies that could be useful at home to further the child's learning.
- Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November for Senior Infants to 2nd Class and in February for Junior Infants.
- An information meeting is held for the parents of incoming Junior Infants in June.
- The Principal and SENCO meet with parents of incoming children with diagnosed additional needs in May/June.
- School support plans and reviews are shared with parents in February and June.

#### **11. Timetabling**

- Supplementary teaching that children receive is in addition to their regular class programme in English and Maths, in so far as is practicable.
- Co-teaching, where two teachers work together to plan, organise, instruct and make assessments on the same group of students, sharing the same classroom can operate during English and Maths times in class. If deemed more beneficial to the group being taught by the Support Teacher, they can be withdrawn to a quiet 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/block.

#### **12. Attendance**

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

#### **13. Monitoring and Reviewing the SEN Policy**

- The Principal and Deputy Principal will monitor and review this policy. This review will be initiated by the SEN Co-ordinator.

#### **14. 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
- On-going analysis of children's academic performance and attainment of personal targets.

List of additional documents used in SEN planning:

- Basic Needs Checklist
- Learning Environment Checklist
- Relate getting to know me parent/child/teacher/SNA diagnostic
- School Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support (Overview Page of SSF)
- Student Support File for this school (Continuum of Support document)
- Permission for child to attend Support Teaching/Parents' Consent Form
- Permission for teacher to administer screening/diagnostic tests
- SEN Record
- Care needs register
- School provision Plan for children with SEN

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier, where changes are required.

*Approved by the Board of Management on 13/04/2026*



*Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins, Chairperson.*