Additional Educational Needs Policy

Scoil Bhríde, Kilbride, Co. Meath

Mission Statement

Our mission at Scoil Bhríde is to stimulate, encourage and challenge each pupil to reach his/her full potential in an environment where children and staff are secure and happy. Our motto is "Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh Sí". We endeavour to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere that respects all children, regardless of their religious, social, cultural background or special educational needs.

Introductory Statement

This policy was completed initially by the Scoil Bhríde Support Team during 2018 to incorporate the changes brought about by the Department of Education and Skills' New Model of SEN allocation in September 2017. Its most recent review was done in April 2024 by the Principal, Deputy Principal (SENCO) and staff of Scoil Bhríde.

Scoil Bhríde is a mainstream primary school with two autism classes "Coiscéimeanna". At present Scoil Bhríde has 13 mainstream classes, 2 autism classes and 6 Special Education Teachers (SET).

Mainstream classes: The mainstream class teachers have the primary responsibility for the progress of all children in their class. Additional teaching support from a special education teacher (SET) may be provided where appropriate.

Coiscéimeanna: These two classes have a lower pupil teacher ratio. They are for children with a primary diagnosis of Autism and a recommendation to attend an autism class attached to a mainstream school. The pupil teacher ratio for Coiscéimeanna is 6:1, SNA ratio is a minimum of two per class. Scoil Bhríde has a separate policy which relates to, Coiscéimeanna, our autism classes.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our AEN (Additional Educational Needs), otherwise known as Special Educational Needs, procedures and practices
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000, EPSEN Act 2004), GDPR and Data Protection Legislation
- fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools: Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Inclusive Education

The NCSE (2011) described inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners. It involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling.

Our whole-school approach to special educational needs provision reflects the Department of Education's commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools:

Schools with strong inclusive cultures are characterised by:

- *A positive ethos and learning environment whereby all pupils, including those with special educational needs, feel welcome and experience a sense of community and belonging*
- *An emphasis on promoting pupils' participation and active engagement in their learning and in the life of the school*
- *A commitment to developing pupils' academic, social, emotional and independent living skills*
- *A focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for all pupils*

DE Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The BOM is responsible for delivering an appropriate education to all students within the limitations of resources provided by the DES.

Deputy Principal as SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)
The DP as SENCO in collaboration with the Principal:

- implements and monitors the school's Additional Educational Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- co-ordinates the provision of additional support with the Special Education Team
- oversees a whole school assessment and screening programme
- allocates time, within the school timetable, for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers in relation to the development of School Support plans and School Support Plus plans when required

- informs staff about external agencies and provides information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- is available to meet with parents regarding concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinates regular SET team planning meetings
- collaborates with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- liaises with the NEPS psychologist, and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- maintains relevant records in compliance with GDPR requirements
- advises on sourcing of materials/ equipment for the benefit of SEN children in school
- communicates with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)

SEN Team (incl. SENCO):

SEN Team

- communicates with the principal /SENCO in relation to SEN (AEN) matters on an on-going basis
- liaises with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- liaises with class teachers to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- maintains relevant records in compliance with GDPR and Data protection legislation
- advises the class teacher on procedures for availing of external special needs services
- supports the class teacher in creating a Student Support File once additional support is required: supports the class teacher in the writing of classroom support plans and collaboratively develops school support plans, for each pupil selected for school support teaching
- where required, meets parents to discuss moving a child from classroom support to school support or when referring to an outside agency
- attends regular SET team planning meetings
- collaborates with the SENCO in creating timetables for additional support
- meets with parents regarding concerns about their child, advises parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and updates them regarding progress
- monitors the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- co-ordinates and supports the screening of pupils for additional support
- selects children for diagnostic assessment with parental permission
- administers diagnostic/screening tests and informs relevant parties of the outcomes
- oversees the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- maintains lists of pupils who are receiving additional support
- familiarises themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs
- assists in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention

- discusses assessment reports of new entrants with SEN and gives practical recommendations on how best to meet the needs of the child.
- meets with class teachers, parents/guardians and/or external agencies to identify priority learning goals and develop a School Support Plus Plan: SSP plan (formerly known as an Individual Education Plan: IEP) for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- meets with class teachers to review SS plans and SSP plans
- ensures the class teacher has a copy of **recommendations** from external assessments for child/ren in his/her class
- ensures the relevant parties have access to copies of **reports** from external assessments
- updates and maintains relevant planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- provides supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- provides supplementary teaching or assists, where possible, with social skills programmes, motor skills programmes and behaviour programmes and the Nurture programme.
- files all student support files, including SS plans and SSP plans as applicable, on password protected Aladdin school system in compliance with GDPR requirements
- collaborates with the class teacher regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
- advises on materials or specialised equipment for the benefit of SEN children
- provides necessary information, to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received in compliance with requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000
- meets with the relevant class teacher and Special Needs Assistant (SNA) to consult, plan and update each child's Pupil Personal Plan (PPP) (for children in receipt of SNA support) in September each year and as required.

Class Teacher:

Each class teacher has primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** pupils in her/his class, including those selected for additional support. The class teacher:

- implements teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils
- creates a positive learning environment within the classroom
- differentiates teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in her/his class
- administers and corrects standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines (SET may collaborate on this)
- discusses outcomes of standardised testing with SEN team to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- meets with parents regarding any concerns about their child and updates them regarding their progress
- gathers information and assesses children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- opens a Student Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develops classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support
- collaborates with staff to develop/review School Support plans for each pupil in receipt of School Support

- meets/collaborates with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members, as applicable, to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and to develop/review School Support Plus plans
- files student support file (containing CS plans) onto password protected Aladdin system
- where applicable, collaborates with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
- assists in co-ordinating the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned
- passes any student reports, received from parents or outside agencies, to SENCO
- meets with relevant SNA and SET to consult, plan and update each child's PPP each year and as required.

Special Needs Assistant (SNA):

The duties of the SNA are carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills (DES circular 0030/2014: The SNA Scheme to Support Teachers in Meeting the Care Needs of Some Children with Special Educational Needs Arising from a Disability) and under the direction of the principal/class teachers. The SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned.

The SNA:

- supports the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- contributes to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils
- provides special assistance, as necessary, for pupils with particular difficulties
- attends SSP meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- assists the teachers in the supervision of pupils with SEN during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods
- maintains a record of support provided to their SEN pupil
- accompanies SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate
- attends as required, training courses/workshops
- meets with relevant class teacher and SET to consult, plan and update each child's PPP each year and as required.

Parents/Guardians:

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school:

"Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs" (DES Guidelines p.23)

The classroom teacher is the first point of contact for parents who have concerns about their child.

It is considered best practice for parents/guardians to:

- share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development

- provide copies of professional reports to the school at the enrolment stage or as soon as they become available.
- support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities

Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

Continuum of Support

The Continuum of Support Framework, set out by the Department of Education and Skills assists in identifying and supporting children with additional needs. Special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. A staged approach is used to ensure that supports and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.
The Continuum of Support also enables the gathering and analysis of data, in order to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

Pupils' educational needs in the areas of literacy and numeracy as well as social and emotional needs, needs associated with physical, sensory, behaviour, language and communication difficulties and application to learning are identified to enable the school respond in a flexible way.

In September each year parents will be introduced by letter/email to the SET who will be working alongside their child's class teacher for that year to implement the School Support Plan or School Support Plus Plan (formerly IEP). When a child is newly identified as requiring school support mid-year parents will be introduced by email/letter to SET at that stage of the school year.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve a member

of the Special Education Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

School Support Plus will generally, though not always, involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom Support and School Support will continue to be an important element of the child's School Support Plus plan (formerly known as IEP)

Note: While most pupils' needs should be met, initially, through classroom-based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant, or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan.

Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does daily for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to help identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, testing, including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and to help formulate a pupil's support plan.

Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures along with teacher observation and teacher-designed measures/assessments:

- Junior Infants: Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP), Termly Maths Assessment
- Senior Infants: MIST, Termly Maths Assessment, Test2r (when applicable)
- 1st class: NNRIT 1, Drumcondra Reading, *Spelling and Maths, Termly Maths Assessment, STAR Reading Assessment
- 2nd class: Drumcondra Reading, *Spelling and Maths, Termly Maths Assessment, STAR Reading Assessment

- 3rd class: NNRIT 2, Drumcondra Reading, *Spelling and Maths, Termly Maths Assessment, STAR Reading Assessment
- 4th class: Drumcondra Reading, *Spelling & Maths, Termly Maths Assessment, STAR Reading Assessment
- 5th class: NNRIT 3, Drumcondra Reading, *Spelling & Maths, Termly Maths Assessment, STAR Reading Assessment
- 6th class: Drumcondra Reading, *Spelling & Maths, Termly Maths Assessment, STAR Reading Assessment

*Note: Drumcondra Spelling Tests are being introduced from May 2024 as part of our School Self Evaluation (SSE) and School Improvement Plan (SIP)
Note 2: we plan to trial the "Words their Way" and "LETRS" screeners during the 2024/2025 school year as part of our SSE in Word Study

The assessment and screening tests are continually reviewed in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore, deviation from the above list, prior to the review date of this policy, may be necessary.

Further Testing Materials:

The following assessments are also available in Scoil Bhríde for administration. The components of this list may be added to or deleted over time.

- Aston Index
- Drumcondra English Profiles
- DST-J
- DTEN-S
- DTEN-D
- Jolly Phonics Reading Assessment
- Neale Analysis
- NGRT
- PhAB
- PM Benchmarks
- Quest
- Test2r
- WRAT-5a
- WIAT 3
- SMART Moves Assessment Profile

During the 2024/2025 school year we plan to consider which testing is most valuable to us and possibly think carefully before using assessments where the norm reference is over 20 years old.

See also Appendix 1 "Components of Core Domains of learning and Suggested Assessments" from School of Inclusive and Special Education, DCU for consideration in relation to holistic assessments – Communication Skills, Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Personal and Social Development and Motor Skills.

Prevention Strategies

Strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- the development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class
- provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it
- ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties
- close collaboration and consultation between the Infant Teachers and the SET team.
- Where appropriate "actively including pupils in a shared Assessment for Learning process", "setting shared objectives and reviewing jointly" *DE Guidelines*
- promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Power Hour, Literacy Lift Off, Levelled Readers, Shared Reading, Library Browser Boxes, Peer Tutoring, Accelerated Reader Programme (AR), Building Bridges of Understanding Comprehension Programme, Word Study (including morphology and etymology)
- promotion of Numeracy e.g. Ready Set Go Maths, Hands-on approach to encourage number sense, skills approach as per new PMC
- parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy
- differentiation – recognising that children differ from one another in how they learn, appropriately matching teaching and assignments, including homework assignments to the needs of the children
- in-class support from a member of the SET team: Team Teaching in its various forms
- early Intervention support from a group of SET
- Aistear Infant Programme
- withdrawal of individuals/groups
- use of literacy programmes such as Hornet Word Wasp, PAT, SNIP, Toe by Toe, Alpha to Omega, Accelerated Reader, Sounds Abound, A Sound Beginning for Reading by Dr. Jennifer O'Sullivan, specific sight word teaching (Dolch and Fry Words)
- Nurture Programme

Transitions from Pre School to Primary and from Primary to Secondary School:

We use the suite of supports available from the NCCA and NCSE to support our pupils with Additional Educational Needs as they move from one level of schooling to another.

Meeting Needs and Allocating Resources

Once pupils' needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support and withdrawal, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively, in so far as possible.

Following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need have access to the greatest level of support.

Selection Process for Allocating Additional Teaching Support

Stage 3 School Support Plus	1. Children with identified complex needs, often by an external professional, such as a • Physical Disability • Hearing Impairment • Visual Impairment • Emotional Disturbance • Moderate General Learning Disability • Severe/Profound General Learning Disability • Autistic Spectrum Disorder • Assessed Syndrome • Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment • **Severe** Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia)	School Support Plus Plan	**Type of Support** In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal **Personnel** SET teacher Class Teacher Outside Agencies
Stage 2 School Support	2. Prevention and Early Intervention Programs e.g. Aistear, Ready Set Go Maths, Power Hour, Literacy Lift Off 3. Children who achieve on or under the 12th Percentile (SS 82) in Literacy or Maths Standardised Tests 4. Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below the 12th percentile in Literacy such as • Borderline Mild General Learning Disability • Mild General Learning Disability • Specific Learning Disability • Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 5. Children who achieve on or under the 24th percentile (SS 89) in Literacy or Maths Standardised tests. 6. Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1, Classroom Support, are further screened by the SET team.	School Support Plan	**Type of Support** In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal **Personnel** SET teacher Class Teacher

Tracking, Recording and Reviewing progress

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. We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils in line with their level of need.

Timetabling

- the SET timetable will be drawn up first and all other school and class timetables will follow on from this
- the provision of supplementary teaching is in addition to the regular class teaching in English Literacy and Numeracy and English Language Support where appropriate

Exceptionally Able/Gifted Pupils

The term exceptionally able is used to describe students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students. Pupils who are exceptionally able or talented include those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve exceptionally high performance in one or more areas such as mathematical, verbal, spatial awareness, musical, or artistic ability.

Our reference handbook in this area is.....

NCSE/Special Education Support Service (SESS):
Information on Exceptionally Able/ Gifted & Talented Children

As referenced in the guidelines key methods in assessment and identification include:

- Observation
- Parent/Guardian referral
- Peer referral
- Self referral
- Referral by other individuals or organisations
- Identification by psychologists
- Teacher referral
- School-wide identification processes

Although there is no single code that defines levels of exceptional intelligence one possible set of levels is as follows: -

- able IQ range 120 to 129
- exceptionally able IQ range 130 to 169
- profoundly exceptionally able IQ range 170+.

As exceptional ability varies on a continuum of ability, the exceptionally able child, assessed at 3 standard deviations above the norm (145) has learning needs as unique as those of a child whose IQ is assessed at 3 standard deviations below the norm (55). In Scoil Bhríde we use the NNRIT – New Non Reading Intelligence Test at present.

We are aware that caution should be exercised with regard to relying solely on IQ measures as exceptional abilities in aspects such as creativity, leadership, art, social and physical skills may not be identified.

There are several approaches that we employ in Scoil Bhríde, when appropriate, and sometimes a combination of all of these may be needed. These are suggested, non-exhaustive activities:

- differentiation: keep the student with their usual age group, again, when appropriate, but provide opportunities for them to learn through exploration and to develop their higher order thinking
- open-ended project work
- peer to peer tutoring
- enrichment activities
- refer to The Irish Centre for Talented Youth, DCU

SEN Records

Maintenance of Database, Record Keeping and the sharing of information to relevant personnel throughout the school:

- the SEN Team are fully compliant with GDPR/data protection regulations 2018.

Links and Supports

The following are our "go to" for advice and support about Special Educational Needs:

- NEPS
- NCSE/SESS
- Primary Care Teams in Dublin 15 and Meath
- Assessment of Need Process: Our team at Scoil Bhríde will be pleased to involve ourselves, when requested to do so, in the AON process for the betterment of any of our students:-

  The Department of Education is satisfied that teachers are suitably qualified, due to their expertise and professional judgement, and therefore "appropriate persons" to be nominated by the NCSE, as appropriate, to assist the HSE in the AON process.....DE Circular 0025/2024

Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Supervision/Child Protection

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both him/herself and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door or the door is left open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher collects and returns children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

Communication and Ratification

Following consultation with staff and parents of Scoil Bhríde, this policy was originally ratified by the Board of Management in February 2019.

Implementation and Review

This policy was implemented in February 2019 and has been reviewed in June 2019 by the Special Education Team, staff and Board of Management. It has been reviewed again in September 2021 and in April/May 2024 by the Special Education Team, staff and Board of Management at Scoil Bhríde.

Signed: _____ Date: 04/06/2024

(Chairperson of Board of Management)