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Introduction

Cork Educate Together School is a multid denominational, coeducational mainstream primary school catering for children from a diverse range of social, cultural and religious backgrounds. It is child centred in its approach to education and democratically run with the active participation of parents encouraged in the daily life of the school. The School works hard to create a positive, warm and comfortable atmosphere where the identity of every child is respected and supported (Educate Together Charter)

The purpose of this Policy Document is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, special needs assistants and other interested parties in the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties as well as fulfilling our obligations under The Education Act 1998. This Policy also recognises that the purpose of the strategy Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020 (Dept. of Education and Skills) “is to raise achievement in literacy and numeracy outcomes for all the students including those with special educational needs.” (Pg 66).

The following categories of pupil will receive supplementary teaching from the Learning Support Teacher and The Resource Teacher under the terms of the General Education Model outlined in the 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 an individual allocation of support through the Special Education Needs Organizer. (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).

Under Current DES guidelines (Sept 1st 2013) SEN allocation allows the school to have:

- ⌚ Three full time and one clustered teacher for children with Special Educational needs;
- ⌚ 2 special needs assistants working in a number of classes

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

We hope to provide for the all-round development of pupils in our care, in as far as our resources can provide. Therefore through our Special Needs Policy we hope to allow for:

- ⌚ An appropriate education for all pupils of the school...
- ⌚ Make the curriculum accessible to all pupils.
- ⌚ Support pupils with special educational needs.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be operative as of 2014. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

Learning Support Policy

Principal Aim:

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 to the best of their ability 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.
- ⌚ To promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole school policy on learning support for these pupils.
- ⌚ To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning. These to date include phonological awareness, peer tutoring and power hour.

Guiding Principles:

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

- ⌚ Effective whole school policies that deliver equality of access and esteem to all children.
- ⌚ Whole school involvement.
- ⌚ Provision of intensive early intervention.
- ⌚ Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

Selection of Pupils for Learning Support

Early Intervention:

- ⌚ Early intervention will only take place if additional support is being provided to pupils who qualify under the selection criteria in English and Maths and individual teaching to pupils who qualify under low incidence department guidelines.
- ⌚ The class teacher and learning support teachers will share the instruction of particular prevention programmes e.g. phonological awareness and other aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- ⌚ Junior Infant pupils are screened using teacher observation.
- ⌚ In Senior Infants all pupils are screened using a combination of “in house” tests (devised by classroom teacher and learning support teacher) and appropriate standardised tests e.g. M.I.S.T.
- ⌚ On entry to the school parents will be required to sign a general consent form to withdraw their children for early intervention programmes from junior infants to second class.

Identification of Pupils in Need:

Children from all classes from First to Sixth will be screened every May for possible learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy. The tests used at present are ‘Sigma-T’ (numeracy) and ‘Micra-T’ (literacy). Learning Support times will be offered on the following priorities:

- ⌚ Pupils scoring below 10th percentile in the Micra-T test.
- ⌚ Pupils scoring below 10th percentile in the Sigma-T test.
- ⌚ The Early Intervention Programme (Literacy) for Junior Infants to Second Class.
- ⌚ The Early Intervention Programme (Numeracy) for First and Second Class.
- ⌚ Pupils scoring between the 10th and 20th percentile in the Micra-T test.
- ⌚ Pupils scoring between the 10th and 20th percentile in the Sigma-T test.

Where possible support will be offered in the following cases, at the discretion of the Special Education Team

- ⌚ Pupils with psychological or other reports deeming them eligible for resource hours over and above the school's existing allocation. (In some instances while awaiting sanctioning by the SENO)
- ⌚ Special cases agreed between the class teacher, the learning support teacher and parents may also be considered where parts one and two of the staged approach have failed. (The staged approach is outlined in Appendix of the Special Education Circular 0205,) (See Appendix 1 of this policy)
- ⌚ Pupils scoring between the 20th and 30th percentile in the Micra-T test.
- ⌚ Pupils scoring between the 20th and 30th percentile in the Sigma-T test.

If a child is absent on the designated date of testing, then testing will be rescheduled for him/her at the earliest possible date. In the event of new children coming to the school in the first term the appropriate Micra-T / Sigma-T will be administered and the same criteria (see above) will apply to selection for learning support. In the event of children arriving in the school in the second or third terms other appropriate standardised literacy and numeracy tests will be administered and the same criteria will apply to selection for learning support.

For children with specific learning disability reports, options as to how to best support these pupils will be considered and discussed in consultation with the classroom teacher, parents and learning support / resource team. Options could range from

- ⌚ Withdrawal for learning support (block or other).
- ⌚ Familiarise students with strategies to be practiced at home.
- ⌚ Strategies and support to be implemented in class

Exceptions to the 10th / 12th Percentile in Third to Sixth Classes:

It may be necessary to include children for Learning Support based on the teachers' knowledge and experience of exceptional circumstances e.g.

- ⌚ Difficult home situations where support cannot be guaranteed
- ⌚ Some children whose mother tongue is not English.
- ⌚ Children who, in spite of learning support and other interventions, do not perform well in class perhaps due to a processing difficulty e.g visual. or auditory.

- ⌚ In the situation where parents refuse to grant consent for their child to attend learning support classes, this must be put in writing and a record of the offer and its rejection should be kept in the child's file.

Provision of Supplementary Teaching

The primary work of the learning support teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above.

- ⌚ A system of withdrawal and/ or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the pupils and to considerations discussed by Classroom Teacher and Learning Support Teacher.
- ⌚ The learning support teacher, in consultation with the Principal and with reference to the guidelines issued by the D.E.S., determines the size of the groups, taking into account the individual needs of the pupils and the overall caseload.
- ⌚ One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective and where caseload permits.
- ⌚ The class teacher and the learning support teacher meet to devise Individual Learning Plan and / or General Education Plans in consultation with parents.
- ⌚ It will be necessary to provide time and supervision of classes in order to facilitate these meetings. This will require discussion and planning before meetings are arranged.
- ⌚ If there is sufficient time available, it is possible that some children who have high levels of ability may be given the opportunity to work on a more challenging programme with the involvement of a member of the S.E.N. team. This would need to be explored and discussed at staff level should the possibility arise.

Conducting Assessments

In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the learning-support teacher is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments, and in maintaining records of the the outcomes of those assessments. The learning support teacher should:

- ⌚ Conduct an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having a suspected learning difficulty.
- ⌚ Monitor the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of learning support.
- ⌚ Review the progress of each pupil at the end of an instructional term.

Individual Learning Programme / Group Learning Programme

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 computer programmes.

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback. A detailed review will take place at the end of the 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.

Timetabling:

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

Inclusion:

- ⌚ We hope to include all pupils, irrespective of needs, into all aspects of school life. Support and empathy are encouraged through the SPHE programme, the RSE programme, games in PE programme and our Code of Behaviour.
- ⌚ Circle time may be used in class or in the learning support setting to encourage inclusion.
- ⌚ Co-operative games in PE also encourage team work.
- ⌚ Senior pupils may be encouraged to interact at all times with children in junior classes to encourage helpfulness, responsibility, empathy and inclusiveness

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:

- ⌚ 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 (learning support teacher) and the class teacher; and
- ⌚ Regular communication between the LST and parents.

Referral to Out-of-school Agencies

- ⌚ The Learning Support Teacher and class teacher in consultation with principal and parents co-ordinate the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist.
- ⌚ The Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent;

- ⌚ The necessary referral forms are completed by the appropriate school personnel;
- ⌚ The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, class teacher and the Learning Support Teacher as appropriate and assessment is conducted;
- ⌚ This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed;
- ⌚ 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.

Provision of Resources:

- ⌚ Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- ⌚ Following consultation between the Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided by the school.
- ⌚ Learning Support resources will be primarily be used in the learning Support Room. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher.

Success Criteria:

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

- ⌚ Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme.
- ⌚ Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support 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 pupil's progress.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Class Teacher:

- ⌚ Observe pupils under his or her care with a view to identifying children who may need support.
- ⌚ Establish the required support systems as set out in the staged approach of Circular 0205.
- ⌚ Teachers from first to sixth administer Micra-T and Sigma-T to all children in the class on one day in May of each year in so far as this is possible. In the case of children who are absent on the day the test is administered, it should be administered as soon as possible after their return.
- ⌚ Correcting the tests and putting the results in order as directed by the Special Education Teacher.
- ⌚ Requesting parents' approval to refer a child for additional support.
- ⌚ Modify and differentiate class programmes to suit the needs of the pupils

Role of Special Education Team:

- ⌚ Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties.
- ⌚ Providing additional support to pupils who qualify under the- selection-criteria in English and Maths.
- ⌚ Providing individual teaching to pupils who qualify under low incidence departmental guidelines.
- ⌚ Development of a suitable Individual Profile and Learning Programme for each pupil who is selected.
- ⌚ IEP targets achieved are recorded in on-going progress records for each individual or group.
- ⌚ Delivering early intervention programmes for literacy and numeracy to children in the junior section of the school.
- ⌚ Collating reports on screening tests for the purpose of selecting pupils for learning support.

- ⌚ Meeting with parents/guardians of each pupil in receipt of individual teaching at the beginning of each term. The purpose of this meeting is to review the pupil's attainment, to discuss suitable targets for the coming term and to revise the IPLP accordingly.
- ⌚ Co-operating and liaising as necessary with the principal, class teacher, parents and external agencies.
- ⌚ Directing, supporting and providing relevant information / resources for Special Needs Assistants.
- ⌚ Liaising with external agencies
- ⌚ The learning support teacher should not be expected to provide teaching cover for colleagues who are absent.
- ⌚ If a child is entitled to an exemption from Irish, as indicated on a psychological report, the parents will be informed of the correct follow up procedure to allow for this exemption. It is at the parents' discretion to decide if or when they want their child to continue or discontinue learning Irish.

Role of the Parents:

The school communicates with parents of children with SEN in line with relevant provision in the EPSEN Act 2004. The school welcomes parental input, about any aspect of their child's special needs and value parents as partners in education. Parents are consulted informally and formally during the school year, which can be requested by either parents or teachers. Parents are advised as to how they can support school work at home. If they so wish, the school can give parents information on reading material on outside bodies which may be useful in relation to their child's SEN.

If parents do not want their child to avail of learning support/ resource teaching in school, they should so advise in writing. Likewise if parents want the principal to apply to the DES for an exemption from Irish, they must request this in writing. The school is mindful of possible parental sensitivities around their child's special educational needs, particularly if difficulties with literacy or other needs exist within the child's immediate or extended family.

It is in the best interests of the child that all relevant information be given to the school at enrolment and following any assessment or other outside professional advice/ consultation.

Role of the Pupil:

It is important for the students to have an input into the development, implementation and review of their own learning. By doing so they can:

- ⌚ Become more independent as learners;
- ⌚ Become aware of different learning styles;
- ⌚ Become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs;
- ⌚ Enjoy success and evaluate their progress;
- ⌚ Excel at and enjoy many curricular and extra curricular activities which would not be practical in the mainstream class due to class size; and
- ⌚ Develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught during supplementary teaching and apply these strategies and skills in their mainstream class situation

Role of The SNA:

- ⌚ Accompany and stay with children in the yard.
- ⌚ Oversee the children's general behaviour and conduct in class.
- ⌚ Fulfil the needs of the children who are in need of support, as determined by the class teacher and directed by the principal.

Note: This following information is an Appendix attached to **Circular 07/02**, and as such is the most recent clearly defined role of the Special Needs Assistant.

Their duties are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with **Circular 10/76**: "Duties and responsibilities of Principal Teachers" and sanctioned by the Board of Management. Their work should be supervised either by the Principal or by a class teacher.

Those duties involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as:

- ⌚ Preparation and tidying up of classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
- ⌚ Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.

- ⌚ Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g. helping physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
- ⌚ Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
- ⌚ Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
- ⌚ Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
- ⌚ Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
- ⌚ General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class).
- ⌚ Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.

Guidelines for SNAs in Cork Educate Together School

(The following guidelines for SNAs are to be discussed at a staff meeting in June 2012)

- ⌚ The SNA is directly responsible to the principal of the school. However, the class teacher will direct the SNA's activities on a day to day basis, with the agreement of the principal.
- ⌚ As class teachers change from year to year, the SNA will be expected to adapt to the teacher's routine, but in general the SNA's role will be that of support to the child in his class work, play-time and related activities.
- ⌚ SNAs should accompany children to and from the yard at yard times. They should oversee the conduct of the children in their care during yard-time. In the case where yard time is extended, the SNAs should stay in the yard.
- ⌚ Removal from the classroom of special needs children may be necessary from time to time for exceptional reasons, such as disruptive behaviour. Such occasions and breaks from class contact time should be kept to a minimum and should not be used as rewards. Parents should be informed of these exceptional breaks by the class teacher.

The SNA is not answerable to parents and all enquiries of whatever nature should be referred to the class teacher or principal. The SNA may be invited to attend meetings with parents and other educational personnel at the discretion of the principal. No meetings will take place without the principal, class teacher or resource teacher present

The deployment / redeployment of SNAs is a decision for the principal in consultation with the learning support / resource team and classroom teachers.

Role of the Principal:

- ⌚ To oversee and ensure that the standardised tests (currently Sigma-T, Micra-T) are administered, corrected and the results recorded.
- ⌚ To ensure that the children receive supplementary tuition in accordance with priorities outlined in this document.
- ⌚ To ensure that the children identified as needing assessment are referred to the appropriate agency.
- ⌚ To liaise with the S.E.N.O.
- ⌚ To initiate the induction of the SNAs
- ⌚ To assume responsibility for liaising with parents who refuse additional support.

Role of the Board of Management:

The Board of Management will supply and maintain suitable accommodation and resources for the Special Education section of the school.

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 with special needs and to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1988

Definition of Special Needs:

We understand special needs to be that as defined in D.E.S. circulars. Intervention with pupils will be delivered in a manner that best meets the needs identified, which may be through group or individual teaching.

Identification and Selection of Children with Special Needs:

Concerns about individual children may arise in a number of ways:

- ⌚ Parents inform the principal or class teacher of a concern they have regarding their child;
- ⌚ Teachers having a concern regarding a child in their class; and
- ⌚ Concerns arising following standardised testing

Procedures to be Followed:

Having consulted with teachers and parents involved, the Principal will seek appropriate assessment from the relevant outside agency such as N.E.P.S or the H.S.E. with a view to qualifying for support from a Resource Teacher.

In the situation where parents refuse to grant consent for the child to attend such an assessment this must be put in writing and a record of the offer and its rejection should be kept in the child's file.

The Education Welfare Act 2000 authorises 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); and 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:

- ⌚ 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; and
- ⌚ 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 learning programme for each pupil in consultation with other partners in 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, computer programmes and other related matters;
- ⌚ Meeting and advising parents when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary; and
- ⌚ Meeting with relevant professionals in the child's interest e.g. psychologists, speech and language therapists and visiting teachers.

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; and
- ⌚ Likewise the school will endeavour to ensure that pupils do not miss classes they particularly enjoy such as Art, P.E. or Information and Communications Technology.

Enrolment of Children with a Disability and / or Special Needs:

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school's current Enrolment Policy. However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

- ⌚ Cork Educate Together School is an 'ordinary' mainstream school, and has higher pupil/teacher ratios such as those that apply in 'special' schools.
- ⌚ The school building is over one hundred years old and consequently the design of the building has physical limitations. It does not compare well with a modern purpose built primary school and the site offers no space for expansion or provision of specialised facilities. These factors may be a consideration for parents who contemplate enrolling a child with particular physical needs.
- ⌚ While pupils with special needs can be integrated into a mainstream class, and may be supported by a Special Needs Assistant and Resource teaching, as allowed by the DES, this is not the same as the intensive one to one teaching s/he would enjoy in a special school.
- ⌚ An ordinary mainstream school does not have ancillary services enjoyed by special schools, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy.
- ⌚ A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the

school, including those with a disability and /or special educational needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the Staff and Board of Management.

- ⌚ From year to year the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in personnel.

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ special educational needs. To ensure this, we require:

- ⌚ A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
- ⌚ To enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times
- ⌚ An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an on-going detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.

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

The role of all the above in the education of children who have been allocated resource teaching is as in the previous section i.e. Learning Support Section.

Transfer to Post-Primary:

- ⌚ In the year prior to children transferring to secondary school every effort is made to help the child make a smooth transition.
- ⌚ Parents are contacted early in the school year about their choice of school for the following year – parents are made aware that resources may be limited in secondary school so early application is vital. When parents give the school permission to contact the secondary school the principal will contact the new principal to make them aware of the child's needs.
- ⌚ Where possible the child may be re-assessed prior to transfer. Again this will be based on current assessment needs in the school. Permission would be sought from parents to have the results of assessment passed onto the secondary school of their choice.
- ⌚ In certain circumstances the SENO may help in the transition of the pupil and the communication with the new school re resource hours, teaching hours, SNA etc.

Record Keeping:

- ⌚ A locked filing cabinet containing records is kept in the school. This is updated each year. A folder is organised for each pupil. The folder will contain relevant details such as – enrolment form, results of tests, report cards, absence notes, results of assessment and any other relevant information.
- ⌚ Access to this filing cabinet is restricted. Teaching staff have access to the records of children in their care. If there are sensitive issues these will be kept in a separate folder.
- ⌚ External assessments are kept with the child's records (unless they are of a sensitive nature) The learning support teacher also has a copy of these reports. These are locked in the learning support teachers file.

- ⌚ Parental approval is sought before passing on records. Prior to assessment parents give their consent to have records passed on to relevant bodies – DES, SENO etc. Records of external assessments are not passed on to the child's next school without parents' permission.
- ⌚ When children leave the school their records are stored in the school until the child reaches 21 – it may be later if the school feels it may be relevant to keep them in storage

Cluster Wide Policy:

Where a cluster of schools shares the services of the same learning-support teacher(s), it will be necessary for each school in the cluster to contribute to the development of a cluster-wide policy on learning support. The development and implementation of a cluster-wide policy is essential to ensure that the learning support service gives priority to the needs of those pupils in each school who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties.

Setting Up a Learning-Support Service

When a learning-support service is being set up in a cluster of schools, a meeting involving the principal teachers, the learning support teacher(s) and, if possible, the inspector(s) attached to each school in the cluster should be convened by the principal of the base school to address the following issues:

- ⌚ Co-ordination of special services across the schools in the cluster, including the role, as appropriate, of the learning support teacher in co-ordinating services in individual schools.
- ⌚ Criteria for selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and mathematics, with reference to the needs of pupils in different schools in the cluster so that resources are directed towards the schools with the greatest needs.
- ⌚ Criteria for continuing, reducing and discontinuing support for pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching from the learning-support teacher.
- ⌚ Arrangements for providing frequent intensive early intervention programmes to pupils in the junior section of the school.
- ⌚ Arrangements for providing supplementary teaching to pupils in the senior section of the school. Arrangements should be made for providing supplementary teaching to pupils in the third to sixth classes who experience very low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- ⌚ Agreement should be reached on the maximum number of pupils in the cluster who can be provided with supplementary teaching by the learning-support teacher in any given instructional term (approximately 30 pupils).
- ⌚ The issue of travel between schools during the school day by the learning-support teacher should be addressed in the context of deciding how best to meet the needs of pupils across all the schools in the cluster. A general principle is that travel time

should be kept to a minimum so that the amount of time that is available for working with pupils and engaging in consultative activities is maximised.

- ⌚ The learning support teacher should not be expected to carry out playground supervision in schools other than the base school. The fact that the learning-support teacher has to travel between schools should be taken into account in assigning playground duty in the base school.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1

A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs		
Observation	Process	Personnel Involved
<p>Stage 1</p> <p>Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development</p>	<p>Class teacher administers appropriate screening measures. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil's identified needs within the normal classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☎ Class teacher ☎ Parent <p><i>Additional Supports Available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☎ Home School Liaison Teacher ☎ NEPS Psychologist
<p><i>If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may be consulted about the desirability of a move to Stage 2</i></p>		
<p>Stage 2</p> <p>Child is referred to learning support teacher, with parental permission for further diagnostic testing.</p>	<p>If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's learning plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☎ Class teacher ☎ Parent ☎ Learning Support Teacher <p><i>Additional Supports Available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☎ Home School Liaison Teacher ☎ NEPS Psychologist ☎ Other Support Staff and Services available to school
<p><i>If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3</i></p>		
<p>Stage 3</p> <p>School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.</p>	<p>A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☎ Class teacher ☎ Parent ☎ Learning Support Teacher ☎ Resource Teacher (if available) ☎ Relevant Specialist <p><i>Additional Supports Available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☎ NEPS Psychologist ☎ Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments ☎ Speech and Language Therapist ☎ Occupational
	<p>Any private practitioner engaged by a school at Stage 3 should have the relevant Department of Education and Science Circulars and guidance notes drawn to their attention.</p>	

		Therapist Ⓟ Psychiatrist Ⓟ Audiologist Ⓟ Paediatrician
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