

Special Education Needs Policy

GNEEVEGUILLA N.S.

POLICY ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs in a mainstream setting in Gneeveguilla N.S.

Introductory statement

This policy was devised by the teaching staff of our school. The original policy was devised February 28th 2013, following the sanction of a full-time Learning Support/Resource Teacher staff position, the previous September. SDPS personnel were consulted.

The policy is under constant review to take into account changes in eg in SEN provision, the National Strategy for Literacy & Numeracy and school focus on the development of more in-class Team Teaching.

Rationale

Gneeveguilla N.S. is a co-educational mainstream primary school. The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers and parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support/resource teaching to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfill our obligations under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of Gneeveguilla N.S.

Gneeveguilla N.S. seeks to provide an appropriate education for all pupils of the school, in line with their individual learning needs. We believe each pupil in our school can enrich our whole school community.

Aims

Through the implementation of this policy, Gneeveguilla N.S. aims –

- To enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education

- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of children with special needs in the school
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

Format

This policy on provision for pupils with special educational needs takes the following format:

Provision for the enrolment of children with identified special educational needs

Provision for children with emerging special educational needs

(Continuum of Support, NEPS / The Staged Approach, Circular 02/05) Appendix 1

Classroom Support / Stage 1: Procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of the special educational needs of certain children

School Support / Stage 2: Referral to Special Educational Needs Teacher

School Support Plus / Stage 3: Consultation or referral for assessment to outside specialist

Drafting and Implementing an Education Plan

Inclusion

Deployment of staff

Collaboration and communication

Resources

Transfer to post primary school or to another primary school

Record Keeping

Other related policies – e.g. Code of behaviour, Anti-bullying, Assessment

Provision for the enrolment of children with identified special educational needs

In coming to a decision re the enrolment of a special needs pupil, the Board of Management (BoM) considers the following-

(1) EPSEN Act 2004, Section 2 “A child with special educational needs **shall** be educated in an **inclusive** environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with –

a) *The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or*

b) *The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated”*

(2) Education Act 1998: 15.-(2) d. *A board shall.... publish... the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to.... the participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy, principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents’ choice are respected*

Parents seeking to enrol a child with Special Educational Needs in Gneeveguilla N.S. are reminded that it is a requirement on their part to:

inform the school at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the educational need

advise the school of any resources / special equipment that may be required

supply the school with all available assessment reports

maintain informal contact with the school on an on-going basis

attend formal IEP meetings where applicable

contribute to target-setting and IEP programme monitoring – reviewing ITPS every term

Communication

Prior to the child’s enrolment, parents/guardians are requested to communicate the child’s special needs and whether these are categorised as High Incidence or Low Incidence. The school acquaints itself with each child’s needs through the following:

Meeting between parents/principal/class teacher/special needs staff and SENO, as appropriate

Obtaining copies/details of reports, assessments etc. from SENO, parents

Contact with Special Educational Needs Organiser, NEPS Psychologist or other psychologist/speech therapist/ occupational therapist, referral from other Agency etc.

Transition

Efforts are made to ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school through

pupil/parent visits in advance, if desirable;

- Open day for Junior Infants

Making all school employees and pupils aware of the need for inclusion (EPSEN Act)

Liaison with SENO to arrange for additional personnel, resources, training, if necessary.

Health and safety issues arising from the child's mobility and care needs will be identified and where possible, strategies will be developed to address them. These may include. access, toilets, supervision, administration of medicine, intimate care, course for SNA e.g. lifting techniques.

Provision for children with emerging special educational needs:

Gneeveguilla N.S. adopts **The Staged Approach** (*See Circular 02/05 and Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007*)

[See Appendices 2 & 3]

Stage 1: Procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of the SEN of certain children.

Concerns re the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a child are identified in the teaching and learning situation e.g. through teacher observation, parental observations, use of simple teacher designed checklist, Infant profiling, screening measures etc. Screening Tests and Standardised Tests are administered on a class basis each year as follows:

Class	Test
Jun Infants	BIAP-Belfield profiles-all children at end of Junior Infants
Snr Infants	MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) – Second Term
1 st Class	<p>Quest screening – ReadingQuest screening – MathsQuest Spelling Test</p> <p>Schonell Spelling Test</p> <p>Micra-T Reading</p> <p>Sigma-T Maths</p> <p>NRIT</p>
2nd -6th Class	<p>TestMicra-T Reading</p> <p>Sigma-T Maths</p> <p>NRIT</p> <p>Banger – screening for dyslexia</p> <p>Spar – reading test</p> <p>Young – cloze procedures</p> <p>Schonell – spelling</p> <p>Start September 2013 – Jolly phonics & Jackson phonics assessment</p>

Classroom Support ~ Stage 1

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs in the school. 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. A 'Home-School Communication' Notebook may be used to communicate progress of strategies between parents and teacher. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs. [See Appendix 5]

A pupil receiving support within their classroom would be considered to be at **stage 1** in terms of the "Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning" (**DES Special Education Circular 02/05**)

If concerns remain after several reviews, or maximum of two academic terms, the child may be referred to learning support teacher, with maximum of parental permission for further diagnostic testing. 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.

School Support ~ Stage 2

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. [See Appendix 6] .The class teacher needs to involve the learning support/resource teachers 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 or an Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP).

A pupil receiving mostly group support or occasional individual support in addition to classroom support would be considered to be at **stage 2** in terms of the "Staged Approach to Assessment Identification and Programme Planning" (**DES Special Education Circular 02/05**)

Arrangements for School Support (Supplementary Teaching / Learning Support):

The following categories of pupils will receive supplementary teaching -

- Pupils whose achievement is at or below the 20th percentile on standardised tests in English or Mathematics. Priority is given to pupils in 0 – 10th percentile. Definitions - 10 – 20th depending on individual needs and availability in school.

- 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 special educational needs arising from high incidence disabilities (borderline mild general learning disability, mild general learning disability and specific learning disability).

The principle of Early Intervention applies; therefore pupils in Junior classes are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support. (Infants – 2nd Class)

- In the case of pupils performing at or below the 20th percentile, the screening process is followed by a meeting between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil's performance and supplementary teaching is offered. In the event of parental refusal of supplementary teaching, this is requested in writing and a record kept.
- Parental consent is sought at enrolment for the conducting of diagnostic assessment.

In the allocation of places for Supplementary Teaching/ Learning Support, the following are prioritized:

1. Children in 1st and 2nd classes at or below the 20th percentile in literacy.
2. Children in 3rd class and 4th class at or below the 20th percentile in literacy.
3. Early Intervention involving Senior Infants.
4. Children in 1st and 2nd classes at or below the 20th percentile in numeracy.
5. Children in 3rd and 4th classes at or below the 20th percentile in numeracy – depending on overall caseload.
6. Support for children presenting with difficulties in literacy and numeracy in all classes.

Provision of Supplementary Teaching /Learning Support

- A system of in-class support operates in the school in literacy and numeracy [See Appendix 5].
- Where appropriate, withdrawal of some pupils for small-group instruction is timetabled;
- The school year is divided into 2 instructional terms of approximately 13 weeks each;
- The Learning Support Teacher decides the size of groups, taking into account the individual needs of pupils, the possibility of grouping pupils with similar needs and the overall caseload;
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective and caseload permits.

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

- One Learning Support Teacher
- Two shared Resource Teacher (changes annually depending on NCSE low incidence hours and GAM)

Individual Profile Learning Programmes and/or Group Learning Programmes are devised following consultation among Learning Support Teacher, Class Teacher, Principal and parents. Where appropriate, the pupils involved also contribute to setting their own short-term targets.

Individual Learning Programmes and Group Learning Programmes

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

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

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

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

The Learning Support Teacher will maintain the following documentation in individualised files

- Individual Profile Learning Programme / Group Learning Programmes
- Work samples
- Reading analysis records
- Observations, checklists, other assessment details

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary withdrawal Teaching

It is a school aim that where possible, pupils spend no more than two years in Supplementary Teaching. An end of instructional term review is carried out in May/June

and a decision is made to continue /discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching.

The criteria on which this decision is made include:

- whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
- the likelihood of the pupil being able to cope in the classroom learning context

A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP. The decision-making process will also take into account the overall learning support demands in the school.

Communication Strategies

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

The various strands of this system include:

- Meeting parents of Junior Infant children to explain school policies and how parents and teachers can work together for the benefit of pupils.
- Informing parents of concerns regarding progress in school.
- Outlining the school's practice with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures.
- Consultation between Class teacher and Learning Support teacher following a low score on a screening test
- Consultation between Principal and/or Learning Support teacher and/or Class teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval for diagnostic assessment and provision of supplementary teaching
- Ongoing communication between the LST and the class teacher
- Regular communication between the LST and parents of pupils receiving supplementary teaching

If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3. This is where the school formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.

School Support Plus ~ Stage 3

If a pupil's special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally 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 his/her individual education plan.

A pupil receiving more intensive teaching support including more focused small group work or individual teaching is considered to be at **stage 3** in terms of the “Staged Approach to Assessment Identification and Programme Planning” (**DES Special Education Circular 02/05**)

While most pupils’ initial needs should be met 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. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school.

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 will be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan will be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.

PROCEDURES

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)

The following procedures will therefore be followed:

1 Having consulted with the teacher and parents involved, the Principal will seek appropriate assessment with a view to the pupil qualifying for support through school Resource Teaching.

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)

2 In a situation where parents refuse to grant consent for their child to attend for either a psychological assessment or learning support, a record of the offer and its rejection will be kept by the school.

Decisions regarding priority of pupils for assessment is made by the Principal, in consultation with SEN team and sometimes following advice from the NEPS psychologist. Where parents opt for a private assessment, they are requested to supply the school with assessment reports.

Drafting and Implementing an Education Plan

A pupil Individual Education Plan (IEP) [See Appendix 8] is drafted for each pupil in receipt of Low Incidence Resource hours. This document aims to -

Support access to a broad and balanced curriculum

Provide structure

Provide for a continuum of support

Ensure records are kept

Identify pupil progress at a level commensurate with ability

The following information is recorded in the pupil IEP-

Learning strengths: based on teacher observation, parent observations, SNA observation

Learning needs: based on psychological report, teacher input, parental input, pupil input

Pupil's current level of performance

Pupil's priority learning needs

Learning targets

Resources and personnel involved

Implementation of the plan

Date for review of the IEP

The school IEP document format is outlined below:

Parental input is invited (see Appendix 8) and a meeting is arranged with parents prior to the drafting of the IEP. This meeting may be attended by Principal, SEN teachers and SNA, if applicable. A review of IEPs is carried out in Feb. and in June of each academic year and review documents are retained (see Appendix 10).

Inclusion

The school aims to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included as fully as possible in the life of the school and the classroom by -

a school ethos which values the individuality of every pupil

a differentiated approach to teaching

the inculcation of awareness of the needs of persons with any kind of disability.

Deployment of staff

It is school policy to ensure the most effective deployment of staff in meeting the overall SEN requirements of the school taking into account the experience/expertise of teachers, part-time teachers, newly qualified teachers and SNAs .

Duties assigned to SNAs are in line with Circular 07/02.

Collaboration and communication

Every effort is made by the school to facilitate collaboration between those involved in pupils' education, particularly in the case of a SEN pupil. The parent/teacher meetings should be followed when concerns arise about a child.

Parental requests for meetings with class teachers, may be facilitated if suitable arrangements can be made for the supervision of the pupil's class. Informal consultations among involved personnel eg Principal, Class Teacher, SEN team, SNA are facilitated when necessary within the school.

Resources

The school seeks to acquire the best resources for use with SEN pupils. These range from resources to teach literacy and numeracy to motor skill, social skill and speech & language development resources. These resources are stored either in centrally-located areas or in the SEN department. The school BOM is happy to consider any request for funding of resources.

Transfer to post primary school or to another primary school

Gneeveguilla N.S. recognises that for pupils with special educational needs, the transition from one primary school to another, or from primary to post-primary school can be challenging. We aim to support these pupils in making this transition, by communicating relevant pupil details regarding strengths, needs, likely targets and helpful strategies with the appropriate personnel in the transfer school. This is done with prior parental consent and SENO advice may be sought where desirable.

Record Keeping

The following records are kept for SEN pupils, in addition to the standard School Pupil Profile-

IPLP & IEP (for Low Incidence pupils in receipt of resource hours) [See Appendix 7]

copies of any assessment reports received from outside agencies

records of meetings

any other documentation pertinent to the child's learning.

A school SEN profile is also kept. [See Appendix 9].

Bearing in mind the child's entitlement to confidentiality, access to all records is on a need to know basis.

Records will be kept in a secure filing cabinet and maintained by the school until the child reaches the age of 21.

The school will be obliged under Section 28 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, to communicate the child's attendance and educational progress with any transfer school.

Other related policies

It is recognised by the school that some aspects of this policy may impact upon other policies in the school. Our Code of Behaviour /Anti-Bullying Policy recognises special needs in the area of behavioural and emotional difficulties and non-compliance with school codes is dealt with sensitively and in accordance with each pupil's individual needs.

In addition, the school's curricular and organisational policies and plans take into account the needs of pupils with SEN through differentiation of content and methodologies.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of our policy will be supported as follows:

Principal

- Co-ordinating Supplementary teaching and Special Needs services within Gneeveguilla N.S.

SEN Teachers

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties
- Developing individual profiles and learning programmes for pupils who are selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and parents
- Developing individual education programmes for pupils in receipt of resource hours
- Maintaining weekly/fortnightly planning for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of SEN teaching
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes to pupils in Junior Classes
- Meeting with parents to discuss pupil's progress
- Providing teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement
- Contributing to the development of literacy and numeracy policy at the whole school level
- Liaising with class teacher on individual pupil's needs and progress
- Liaising with external agencies
- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special educational needs teaching
- Conducting diagnostic assessment
- Maintaining and reviewing pupil assessment records
- Liaising with Principal, teachers, parents and outside agencies.

Class Teacher

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

- Making parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress
- Outlining the schools practise with regard to diagnostic testing and follow up procedures
- Where possible attending meeting between SEN Teacher and pupil's parents
- Consulting and co-operating on IPLPs / IEPs
- Being alert to the possibility that some children may have a specific learning difficulty/ other special educational need and bringing this to the attention of the SEN team
- Modifying class programmes to suit the needs of pupils
- Outlining SNA duties where applicable

Parents

Gneeveguilla N.S. acknowledges the central role played by parents of all pupils and particularly of SEN pupils. We value strong communication links between home and school and identify support for and participation in their child's learning as key parental responsibilities.

Pupil

(Pupil roles and responsibilities are commensurate with their age and ability)

The school considers pupil input into the development, implementation and review of their own learning as important. Our aim is to enable our pupils to:

1. become more independent as learners
2. become aware of different learning styles
3. become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs
4. enjoy success and evaluate their progress
5. excel at and enjoy many curricular and extra curricular activities which would not be practical in the mainstream class due to class size.
6. develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught during supplementary teaching and apply these strategies and skills in their mainstream class situation

Board of Management

The school BOM takes responsibility for overseeing the implementation and review of this policy and for the provision of adequate resources, accommodation and storage.

Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of this policy will include-

- Inclusion of pupils with special needs into our school
- Progress of pupils with special needs in our school (assessments)
- Feedback from teaching staff, special needs assistant, pupils, psychologists
- Inspector's Reports

Implementation Date

This policy applies immediately and its implementation will be monitored by the school Principal.

Timetable for Review

The operation of this policy will be reviewed every two years and if necessary, amendments will be made.

Policy Ratification

This policy was ratified by the BOM .on _____

This policy is available in the school for all interested stakeholders.

List of Appendices

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In-Class Support Teaching

School Support Plan

IPLP and IEP formats

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- School approach to planning for resource provision
- School Staged Approach
- IPLP format
- IEP format
- Parental Consent Letters