

SCOIL NAOMH BRIDE

TULACH CHADHAIN

Learning Support, Language Support, Special Education Needs Policy, Practices and Procedures.

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in partnership with Scoil Chaladh na Muc as the Learning Support Teacher is shared between both schools. Full consultation took place with the teaching staff of both schools. The policy has been ratified by the Boards of Management of both schools.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to define the practises to be used in both schools in order provide effective learning resources for pupils experiencing learning difficulties. These procedures are intended to fulfil the obligations of the school the Education for Persons with Disabilities Act, 2003 and the Department of Education and Skills Circular SP ED 02/05.

Special Needs Co-ordinator

Special education will be co-ordinated by the Principal.

AIMS OF LEARNING SUPPORT

- To outline procedures and practises to be followed in relation to pupils with special needs.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for these pupils in the curriculum areas required.
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To enable pupils with disabilities to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as is feasible and possible.

- To facilitate communication structures between home and school, in the area of special needs.
- This policy subscribes to include all children within Scoil Naomh Bride and Scoil Chaladh na Muc that have a special educational need.
- To facilitate full participation, by the children, in the life of the school the following strategies are in place:
- Group/pair work.
- Social Personal Health Education (SPHE).

Enrolment

- General issues regarding enrolment are covered in school enrolment policy- please refer.
- Parents of children with special needs are requested to meet with the Principal prior to enrolment and prior to acceptance by the school by the school of the child. All reports and assessments should be provided at that time to the Principal. In the absence of suitable assessments the Principal may request and assist the parents in obtaining such assessments.
- Further clarification may be sought by the Principal from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), SENO, DES, the Health Executive and other relevant bodies.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES:

Procedures for early identification/screening/referral of special needs pupils from within the school.

This policy subscribes to the staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning for individual pupils.

- STAGE 1: Careful observation by classroom teacher.
- STAGE 2: Referral to the Learning Support/Resource teacher for diagnostic testing and any interventions thus indicated.
- STAGE 3: Pupils who present with serious behavioural or learning problems or who fail to respond to Stage 2 will require assessment from specialist professionals outside the school. The class teacher, the Learning Support/Resource teacher and the relevant specialists devise an appropriate learning and management programme.

All pupils are screened annually using standardised tests including MIST (infant related), Drumcondra, etc...

The Principal is made aware of any results suggesting the need for additional intervention.

Parents are informed by the class teacher of same.

The maximum number of children receiving learning support at any given time will be 30 per teacher. The 30 places will be filled in the following order:

First priority will be given to children who score at/below 12th percentile in a Standardized English test.

Children who score at/below 12th percentile in a Standardized Maths test.

Children from Senior Infants to Second Class who are experiencing difficulties in English (Early Intervention). 30PR.

Children from Senior Infants to Second Class who are experiencing difficulties in Maths (Early Intervention). 30PR.

The Principal may under certain conditions initiate earlier intervention for a child.

Children who have been assessed by a Psychologist and are deemed to have a difficulty that requires Learning Support.

In exceptional circumstances children above the 12th percentile may attend Learning Support. The school will exercise the flexibility mentioned in the Learning Support Guidelines to ensure that all children who have particular social/home difficulties can be helped through ensuring that any problems that exist are not compounded by learning difficulties.

Where possible provision will be made for exceptionally able students in consultation with parents, class teacher and learning support teacher.

Parental permission is required for referral to Learning Support.

Diagnostic testing is the responsibility of the Learning Support Teacher.

Diagnostic testing can include: Jackson Phonics Test, Miscue Analysis, Dolch List Sight Vocabulary, informal testing of print awareness with left right co-ordination, visual discrimination, oral language and spelling. Also included can be a sample of unaided writing.

Informal testing in Maths to include the conservation of number, problem solving, computation, mathematical concepts and procedures.

The LS teacher discusses the outcome of the diagnostic assessment with the class teacher and with the child's parents.

Pupils are referred for further assessments according to Department guidelines/staged approach – DES Circular SP ECD 02/05.

The Principal, in consultation with the LS teacher and class teacher co-ordinate the referral of pupils to outside agencies e.g. Educational Psychologists or Speech Therapist.

The Principal and/or LS teacher and/or class teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.

The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel and parents.

The external professional may visit the school and consult with all the concerned parties as part of the assessment.

This may be followed by a return visit to the school to discuss findings, recommendations and appropriate responses.

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

Written parental permission is required for the child to receive learning support/resource teaching and referral for assessment.

If parental permission is denied parents/guardians must sign a statement indicating that they were made aware of their child's difficulties and they chose not to avail of additional teaching or referral.

PROVISION OF SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING

The primary work of the Learning Support/Resource Teacher is the provision of supplementary teaching to pupils identified in DES Circular SP EC 02/05.

“additional teaching resources that are allocated to schools under the terms of the general allocation model cannot be used for mainstream class teaching or to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes”

- A system of withdrawal for supplementary teaching is on a one to one or small group basis and in-class provision may be provided.
- The class teacher and the LS/Resource Teacher meet to devise individual educational plans IEPs in consultation with the parents.
- Such plans address the pupil's full range of needs and include:
 - Details from the pupil's 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.
 - Home Support activities.

A copy of the standard format used for the IEP is attached. Each plan is monitored through teacher observation and through the maintenance of planning and progress records.

The LS/Resource Teacher maintains the following:

Individual profile and learning programme.

Samples of written work.

Other relevant records.

The LS/Resource Teacher and/or class teacher will meet the parents to discuss their child's progress twice a year.

Following the review at the end of the term, a decision is made to continue or discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching. This decision will involve consultation between the LS/Resource Teacher, the class teacher and the parents. Other relevant professionals e.g. Speech Therapists, Psychologists may be consulted.

The basis for this decision will include:

Achievement of set targets.

Capacity of the pupil to cope independently in the classroom.

A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the IEP.

Resourcing and Staffing

Resources: Support teachers source specialized resources to meet the needs of pupils.

These resources are generally kept for support teaching.

With regards to staffing the following principles will apply:

The highest level of support will be given to the pupils with the highest level of need.

Experienced and qualified teachers will be deployed, where possible, in the area of special needs.

Pupils with the greatest need will be taught, where possible, by teachers who have the relevant expertise and commitment and who have a degree of permanence of

status that can guarantee continuity of provision. (Ref. Special Education Circular Sp Ed 02/05).

Where an application for supplementary teaching and/or special needs assistant has been sent to the SENO for approval, the school will inform the parents of the decision of the SENO in writing immediately, on receipt of approval, with a proposed timetable for the commencement of additional teaching or SNA.

The proposed timetable will take into account the time requirements for appointing said post.

The BOM will endeavour to ratify the post within six working weeks of SENO approval.

This Policy has been fully revised in November 2012.

It has been ratified by the Board of Management.

The Policy will be reviewed by the Board at the end of the school year 2015 and subsequently as is deemed necessary.