

## Special Education Needs Policy

### Guiding Principles

All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. As far as possible therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

### Three principles for inclusion

#### 1. Setting suitable learning challenges

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

#### 2. Responding to children's diverse learning needs

We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning.

#### 3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning if we do not address them through special arrangements.

### In making provision for children with special needs, our policy objectives are:

- To ensure that our duties, as set out in The Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education Welfare Act 2000 and Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 are fully met
- To enable children with special educational needs to join in the normal activities of the school along with children who do not have special educational needs
- To ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have an equal opportunity to receive an education that is appropriate to their needs
- To identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible – Belfield Infant Assessment & BPVS (British Picture Vocabulary Test) are carried out with Junior Infants & Mist test & British Picture Vocabulary Test (BPVS) in senior infants.
- To use our resources as efficiently and equitably as possible when assessing and meeting the special educational needs of our children
- To provide a graduated approach in order to match educational provision to children's needs;
- To develop a partnership with parents/ carers in order that their knowledge, views and experience can assist us in assessing and providing for their children
- To take into account the ascertainable wishes of the children concerned and, whenever possible, directly involve them in decision making in order to provide more effectively for them
- To ensure collaboration with the DES in order to take effective action on behalf of children with special needs
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities towards children with special needs and are able to exercise them
- To monitor our effectiveness in achieving the above objectives.

### Roles and Responsibilities

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In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BOM, Principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

### **Board of Management**

The BOM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of school planning.

### **Principal**

The principal has overall responsibility for the day- to- day management of provision. She will encourage members of staff to participate in training to help them meet the objectives of this policy. In consultation with the class teacher, she will liaise with the SENO with regard to support hours and is responsible for personnel appointments.

### **Responsibilities of Staff**

All staff should be fully aware of the content of this policy and of the procedures described below.

### **Enrolment**

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that "A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs". Parents are required to notify the school of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment through the application for enrolment form. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report. No child can be refused admission solely on the grounds that he/she has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

### **Special Facilities**

St Safan's N.S is a single storey building with ramps where appropriate. A separate toilet room was built which has an adjustable bed.

### **Resources**

#### **Stages of Assessment and Provision**

Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a class teacher identifies a child with SEN the class teacher should consult with the Principal, Teacher & Support Teacher and provide interventions that are additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the class teacher.

#### **Record of Differentiated Support in class**

Class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

The triggers for this intervention could be;

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school

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- Has sensory or physical difficulties
- Have communication and / or relationship difficulties.

The class teacher makes observations & keeps records of children who may need additional support. If this strategy does not work then the teacher will continue to the next stage.

### School Action

In cases where progress has not improved or if the results of tests (M.I.S.T. Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, MICRA T, Sigma T, British Picture Vocabulary scale and teacher observation) indicate this to be the case, intervention in the form of a support teacher will be accessed. Again, class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents. The action taken will be as follows:

- The class teacher and support teacher will differentiate the curriculum in specific areas with achievable goals to be implemented by the class teacher and support teacher
- If there are others in the class with similar difficulties in one or more of the specific areas then a group educational plan will be implemented
- These programmes will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- While every effort will be made to allow the pupil to remain included in class there may be a need to work part of the programme in a separate room with the support teacher or class teacher.
- Where progress is such that the child is no longer giving cause for concern the child will revert to the usual differentiated curriculum available to all children.

### Resource

The support or class teacher will perform diagnostic tests on these children usually at the beginning and end of the school year.

These tests will include:

- Neale Analysis (NARA)
- PhAT (phonological awareness test)
- Belfield Infant Assessment (BIAP)
- DEST & DST (Dyslexic Screening test)
- Quest 2 (Diagnostic reading/Maths tests)
- York Reading Assessment
- BPVS 3 (British Picture Vocabulary Scale)
- Aston Index Spelling
- NRIT (Non reading intelligence test)

When it has been identified that a child is still struggling and performing below the tenth percentile despite School Action the class teacher with the support teacher will seek advice from the SENO, in consultation with the child's parents.

1. A psychological assessment will be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004)
2. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including IEP targets and strategies.
3. The triggers for intervention for resource could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child
  - Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
  - Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
  - Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
  - Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and IEP
  - Has sensory and/ or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
  - Has ongoing communication or relationship difficulties that prevent social development, and act as a barrier to learning.

When the special educational needs of the child has been confirmed by the psychologist an application for resource hours will be forwarded to the SENO. The SENO will determine whether

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the child falls into the category of Lower Incidence or High Incidence. Lower incidences will be awarded resource hours while the school makes provision for High incidence cases under the GAM system.

4. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child is not coping in the classroom setting, a special needs assistant may be applied for.
5. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from Irish the Principal will see to this under guidance from the DES.

### **Individual Education Plan**

An IEP is drawn up based on the information gathered. The Individual Education Plan should describe:

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents.
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how these needs affect his/her educational development.
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil.
- The special educational needs of the pupil.
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from education including:  
Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting (classroom support)
- Individual and/or small group interventions/programmes (station teaching, writing groups and shared reading)
- Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented (ABC chart, Time Out, classroom privileges, rewards and sanctions, Quiet Learning Time)
- Specific equipment, materials and/or IT supports if required to support learning and access to the curriculum.
- Support required for the Special Needs Assistant (SNA) if appropriate.
- The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months e.g. The pupil's priority learning needs (long term) short term targets to be achieved.
- Monitoring and review arrangement to be put in place.

### **Review of IEPs**

- Parents will be invited to contribute to the review with the class teacher and Resource teacher. Other outside professionals (NEPS Psychologist) may attend as appropriate or necessary.

### **The review process should focus on:**

- Progress towards targets made by the pupil
- Any new information and/or assessment results
- The effectiveness of the strategies/methodologies used.
- The effectiveness of the materials/equipment provided.
- The effectiveness of the supports(individual,groups, class) provided
- Future action

### **The outcome of the review process may be:**

The pupil continues to need intervention at School Support Plus Level

- Satisfactory progress made by the pupil and an updated IEP is drawn up
- The IEP is considered to need adjustment, a new or adapted plan is drawn up
- The pupil's progress remains satisfactory following review and all concerned decide to increase gradually the periods between reviews.
- The pupil no longer needs support at School Support Plus Level.
- The pupil's needs may be met by having a School Support Plan in place.
- A small number of pupils may arrive in school with difficulties that are more significant or which are already recognised by professionals via the HSE. In such cases a School Support or School Support Plus Plan will be put in place as per NEPS advice and or the decision of the SENO.

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**Inclusion** We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice, which makes it possible. Our policy, as set out in this document, will enable children with SEN to be an integral part of our school community.

## **Behavioural, Social and Emotional Wellbeing**

Teachers at St Safan's N.S promote a positive approach to behaviour. The staff are encouraged to work together to create a culture and climate in the school which is accepting and supportive of parents and pupils.

There is structured observation and assessment of the behavioural, social and emotional wellbeing of the child.

Teachers use whole class rewards/incentives and operate clear consequences systems.

## **Ratification of Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

Signed: Michael Fortin  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

Signed: Breda Mc Connell  
Principal

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2015