

Presentation Primary School, Portarlinton
Special Education Needs Policy
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Education Act (1998)
Education Welfare Act (2000)
The Equal Status Act (2000)
Disability Bill (2002)
E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004)
Special Education Circular SP ED 02/05
Circular 12/96

Roll No. 15556i

**Presentation Primary School,
Station Road,
Portarlinton,
Co. Laois**



Presentation Primary School Mission Statement

We endeavour to provide a holistic Catholic education for each child, where respect and care for all, are central values.

Special Educational Needs Policy

Introduction

Presentation Primary School, Portarlinton is a Mainstream Primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. The following paragraph from our school Mission Statement affirms the guiding principles of this policy.

The school is committed to a holistic Catholic Education for each child where respect and care for all are central values.

We recognise the uniqueness of each child in our care, and we strive to develop his/her full potential, in a nurturing and mutually respectful atmosphere.

To this end, we work in partnership with parents and the wider community.

Policy Guidelines

This Policy provides practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Acts below:

- Education Act (1998)
- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- Disability Bill (2002)
- E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004)

It is the policy of this school to include all children particularly those with special educational needs as a valued part of the school community (See Appendix 4: Key Steps to Providing Appropriate Support to All Pupils Who Need It).

The population of S.E.N. pupils in school are as below

- Autistic pupils in the Nano Nagle Centre (See separate Policy)
- Low incidence S.E.N. pupils
- High incidence S.E.N. pupils
- International Pupils and Ethnic Minority Groups
- Emotional/ Behavioural Needs
- Gifted pupils

We support the above by:

1. Early intervention.
2. Suitable learning challenges.
3. Responding to children's diverse learning needs.
4. Overcoming barriers to learning and assessment.
5. Ensuring 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.

Inclusive Practice

- **Buddy System:** To enable the school to fulfil its policy with regard to the integration and inclusion of all pupils, a buddy system will be operated according to the needs arising. This is to establish a welcoming and tolerant attitude towards difference within the school community
- To recognise that the S.P.H.E. programme can play a valuable role in supporting inclusiveness when effectively delivered to all pupils. E.g. Walk Tall, Stay Safe
- Circle time will be used to integrate and include all pupils with Special needs
- All pupils are entitled to their breaks and playtimes. Special Needs pupils are supported and monitored by the S.N.As and the Teacher on duty on the yard. Special arrangements and management programmes will be supported by all staff
- The Health and Safety Policy, available to all members of staff, is applicable to all school staff and pupils. Should the question of the administration of Medication arise refer to this policy
- Special Needs pupils including those attending the Nano Nagle Centre classrooms who have needs with regard to hygiene, toilet training and self-care issues are provided with a private toilet room and shower facility if required

Current Provision

The school currently has the following provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs:

Staff:

- 8 teachers within the Special Education Team, including 2 teachers assigned to the Nano Nagle Centre
- 8 Special Needs Assistants

Timetabling:

- The provision of Special Education Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their class and/or In Class Tuition (Appendix 9: Timetables)
- An effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they are withdrawn for support
- It is desirable to adopt a flexible approach to timetabling whilst at the same time ensuring that class disruption be minimised

- Time for consultation and collaboration is essential for all personnel involved in Special Education Support. Whilst it is recognised that informal daily contact is of value, regular meetings will be arranged by organising relief for the class teacher to allow her to liaise with the Special Needs Teacher
- The S.N.A. can provide a regular and consistent liaison between Class and Support areas. This is facilitated by the S.N.A. accompanying the pupil to the support teacher whenever necessary

Categories of Pupils with Special Needs

A.S.D. Pupils are provided for in the N.N.C. (Nano Nagle Centre) with two special classes. Pupils are also supported in mainstream with allocated hours and S.N.A. support.

Pupils are eligible for a place in the N.N.C. if they have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder given by a psychiatrist. (See Enrolment policy for N.N.C.).

1. Low incidence

Low Incidence category is comprised of pupils who have been allocated resource hours. Resource hours are given according to Department of Education guidelines and this information is confirmed to the school by the S.EN.O (Alannah Macey Hogan). The resource teachers then ensure that these pupils have access to resource teaching and suitable supports to enable them to access the curriculum at their individual ability level. Due to the nature of the diagnosis of difficulties provided for, under this category the provision needs to be ongoing and consistent. It will be regularly reviewed in consultation with all personnel.

2. High Incidence

High incidence category is provided for under the General Allocation system. Pupils will be identified by falling into one of the following groups:

- Pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on Standardised Reading or Mathematic Tests
- Pupils identified with mild learning difficulties (see Special Education Circular SP ED 02/05 page 2 section 3; Appendix 3)

- Pupils whose needs arise from High incidence disabilities (Borderline mild general learning disability and Specific Learning Disability. See Sp.Ed.Circ.SP. ED. 02/05 page 2 section 3: Appendix 3)
- This provision will be reviewed at the end of each term and a decision will be made based on the child's progress as to whether this provision will be continued. The criteria for this is based on the following:
 - a) If the pupil has achieved all or some of the learning targets set.
 - b) If the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi-independently in the classroom.

*This decision will involve all personnel.

3. International Students and Ethnic Minority Groups

Our school welcomes pupils of all nationalities and cultures. All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfil this right, differences will be respected and valued. Our school will be pro-active in challenging racism. The school will promote an environment in which cultural differences can be explored and respected, where pupils can learn from each other, and where co-operative learning activities are employed across the curriculum.

- Overseas children, who have a need to learn English Language before being able to access the curriculum, are now catered for under our G.A.M.
- Exemption from Irish Language will be sought if necessary and the documentation will be obtained from the Department see Circular 12/96 (Appendix 11)
- The child will not be required to receive Catholic religious instruction, should the child be non-Catholic. Due to organisational reasons the child is required to remain in class during the Religion class.
- The 'Buddy' system will be used as a whole school system to help the child to integrate and settle into their new environment.
- Identified ethnic minority groups i.e. Travelling Community will be included and valued as part of the school community.

4. Emotional and Behavioural Needs

These difficulties may arise due to various differing reasons. It would be important to identify the trigger to emotional trauma and behavioural difficulties.

- Rewarding systems are available throughout the school according to suitability and age appropriate levels. E.g. Golden Book where 2 children in each class are awarded a 'Student of the Week' certificate
- Positive attitudes are adopted and supported in working with these difficulties
- Parents and other personnel are important and vital to supporting the staff in dealing with these difficulties
- Expertise is acquired by staff being involved in courses and in-service training in Behavioural Management Strategies .i.e. T.E.A.C.H.
- Behavioural Management Programmes are drawn up in collaboration with Special Educational Co-coordinators, Support Teachers, Class Teachers, S.N.A.s, parents, pupils, and where appropriate, the Principal.

5. Exceptional Ability/ Gifted Pupils

From the Report of the Special Education Review Committee 1993, pupils who are exceptionally able or talented are those who have demonstrated their capacity to achieve high performance in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude

A working definition in school, would say that children with ability at the 97th percentile Levels in at least one area are seen as having special needs. (Ed. Act 1998)

Gifted pupils may be identified by:-

- Annual standardized tests
- N.R.I.T.
- Teacher observation
- Peer and parent appraisal
- Referral through other individuals or organisations

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able (IQ of 130+) will be offered a differentiated curriculum and information will be available regarding the relevant outside agencies.

The class teacher and the designated support teacher will collaborate in order to deliver a differentiated curriculum. They will link with parents in order to pass on information regarding referral, assessment and programmes at I.C.T.Y. (Irish Centre for Talented Youth) (Ref: Information from Irish Centre for Talented Youth D.C.U. - <http://www.dcu.ie/ctyi>) see Appendix 1 of N.C.C.A. Publication Draft Guidelines for Teachers: Exceptionally Able Students 2007.

Identification and Assessment

Pupils will be identified by one or more of the following methods:

- The procedure for identification of learning difficulties will be started by following the 3-staged approach as outlined by the Department of Education (see Appendix 7). This would normally be initiated by the class teacher and /or parent following concerns about progress. Following this procedure, will result in the pupil being identified as having needs that are falling into either the high or low incidence category of learning difficulty as defined by the Department of Education.
- The Special Educational Needs Organiser determines what category of provision is suitable to the individual pupil (See Appendix 5 for checklists)
- Speech and Language Therapists /Occupational Therapists/Paediatricians /Psychological services could be a referring agency
- Referrals to the Autistic Centre are accepted following a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder by Psychiatric services and Early Intervention Services in Portlaoise (SPRAOI).
- A list of suitable Tests for Assessment and Screening may be found in Appendix 2.

Roles and Responsibilities

The support of Special Needs Education pupils is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experience. This will include Board of Management, S.E.N.O., Principal, Special Needs Co-ordinator, Class Teacher, Special Needs Teachers, Parents, Special Needs Assistants, Visiting teachers, H.S.C.L. officers

A) The Board of Management has an important role in developing, supporting and monitoring school policy on learning support and special needs. The Board of Management should:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on learning support
- Oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on special needs services in general
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the learning support teacher
- Provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of special needs and learning support services

B) The Principal Teacher has overall responsibility for the school's S.E.N. programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs. This work involves ensuring that the teachers and parents of pupils who are selected for diagnostic assessment and supplementary teaching are enabled to fulfil their roles as outlined in the school plan.

C) The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his /her class including those selected for supplementary teaching. The teacher will:

- Initiate the three stage process in identifying and assessing a potential pupil for special educational resource. The initial stage of this process involves the implementation of a Classroom Support Plan drawn up by the Class Teacher(see appendix 4 for planning templates).
- Acquire knowledge of the educational difficulties of their pupils in collaboration with the support teacher to enable them to integrate and differentiate the curriculum for those with special ed. needs.
- Establish a support network between the Class, and Resource teachers and S.N.As in implementing the programmes.
- Be involved in the drawing up and implementation of the I.E.P.
- Be involved in the collaboration between outside professional agencies and parents in supporting this I.E.P.

D) Parents

Our school makes every effort to ensure that communication channels between the school, parents and outside agencies are maintained to source adequate resources for each child with S.E.N. Parents are kept informed so that everyone is working together for the optimum

benefit of the individual child. The Role of the parents is vital in the success of support for pupils with special needs (Consent forms: Appendix 10). Parents contribute by:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Support Teacher.
- Fostering a positive attitude about school and learning in the child.
- Encouraging and supporting homework tasks.

E) The role of the *Special Needs Co-ordinators* is to:

- Oversee the day to day operation of the S.E.N. policy
- Co-ordinate provision for the children with Special Educational Needs
- Liaise with, advise and support colleagues in order to facilitate planning for Special Needs pupils
- Liaise with and advise S.N.A. with regard to supporting the pupils
- Liaise with and support parents
- Oversee and store the records assessments, Tests and I.E.Ps of all children with Special Needs
- Liaise with all external agencies concerned with the pupils.ie Mary Sherwin N.E.P.S, Alanah Macey Hogan S.E.N.O,
- Monitor and evaluate S.E.N. provision regularly
- Contribute to in-service training of staff. To provide support and a mentoring system to new Special Needs Teachers
- Facilitate and Chair regular meetings of the Special Education Team within school
- Involvement in devising and monitoring Behavioural programmes where necessary in conjunction with other assigned posts and Principal.

F) *Special Education Teachers* will:

- Contribute to the three stage process of assessment with the class teacher.
 - STAGE TWO of the process is a School Support Plan drawn up by the Special Needs Teacher for the year group in collaboration with the Class Teacher, parents, and other personnel.
 - STAGE THREE of the plan involves the support teacher working with the pupil after formal consultation and assessment, drawing up and implementing a School

Support Plus Plan in collaboration with other personnel and the class teacher (see appendix 7).

- Provide input to the special needs pupil according to the diagnosis given and to co-ordinate information about a specific learning difficulty
- Collaborate and liaise with Special Educational Needs co-ordinator as well as parents and outside agencies in providing an Individual Education Plan
- Provide direct teaching and educational support to the individual pupil
- Acquire an expertise and knowledge in the areas of a variety of special needs to enable them to give advice and support to class teachers
- Liaise with the class teacher and S.N.A.s to implement the I.E.P (See Appendix 6 for templates)
- Provide support to the class teacher by assisting with modifications to the curriculum content, developing alternative resources and setting up student support networks in the class

All personal files are stored in locked filing cabinets to protect the pupils' confidentiality.

G) *S.N.As* should:

- Support the child with special needs within the school in terms of physical, emotional social, intellectual support and individual care needs
- Work as part of the Special Education Team which is led by the Special Education Needs Co-ordinators
- Work under the direction of the class teacher in collaboration with the Special Needs Support teachers
- Be involved in further training to enable them to update knowledge of the various special needs in the school population

H) *Visiting Teachers*:

- These teachers allocated by the D.E.S. provide specific learning support in relation to difficulties such as Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment
- The Visiting teacher will liaise with the Support Teacher and Class Teacher in order to provide support and specific information and expertise in these given areas

Collaboration with outside Agencies

These agencies could include any combination of the following

- Speech and Language Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Psychologists
- H.S.E. personnel
- Doctors and Psychiatrists
- Any other personnel involved with the individual child

The school will facilitate and coordinate work with any of the personnel defined above, in order to establish the specific needs of and necessary resources for the pupil. It is recognised that these agencies can deliver valued expertise and advice regarding the many and varied needs arising for the pupils. The teacher will be in a position to coordinate this information and translate it into a consistent and practical application through the curriculum.

Transition

Pupils transferring at 6th class level will be included in all the routines and programmes put in place for the 6th class. Pupils with special needs may need extra support at this time as it is recognised that it could be a time of anxiety and change.

Resource teachers and Class Teachers, parents, S.E.N.O and other relevant professionals involved with a pupil will all be involved in the transition programme.

Meetings will be set up in accordance with school procedure with the Second Level School Teachers to discuss the pupils' needs and to enable ease of transition. Pupils' confidential files and assessments will be passed onto Second Level with written parental consent.

Any 6th Class S.E.N. pupil making the transition to Second Level will be given the opportunity to visit the school in advance.

Facilities and Resources

Resources include a variety of, Textbooks, Reading Schemes, Library books, Oral Language Development materials, Social Skills Programmes, I.T. programmes and varied ancillary materials (Inventory of Resources: Appendix 8)

Assessment and Diagnostic Testing materials are also available. (See appendix 2)

Learning support materials will primarily be used in the learning Support rooms .These resources may be made available to the Class Teachers following consultation with the Special Needs Teacher.

Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2017

