

**LORETO SECONDARY SCHOOL
BALBRIGGAN**

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
POLICY APRIL 2018**



School Mission Statement

Loreto Secondary School Balbriggan is a Catholic girl's secondary school under the trusteeship of the Loreto Trust Board. In the spirit of Mary Ward we aim to develop all the abilities of our students in order that they realise their full potential and use their talents for the service of others. We also aim to encourage self – confidence and self-esteem in a happy atmosphere and structured environment. The school community, collaborating together in mutual respect, strives for holistic excellence.

SEN Mission Statement

We aim to encourage self confidence and self esteem among all our pupils. The whole school, The Board of Management, Parents and Staff are committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all pupils. All pupils who are recognised as having Special Educational Needs are enabled and empowered to:

- Participate fully in the school community
- Acquire the basic personal, social and literacy and numeric skills needed for life
- Experience success
- Develop a positive self-image and encourage self esteem

Introductory Statement

The first SEN policy was coordinated by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, in consultation with Management and the Board of Management, in December 2012. This policy is the reviewed and amended policy completed by a working group in April 2018, in accordance with Circular No 0014/2017.

Rationale

This policy document aims to outline the school's provision of additional educational support for students with SEN.

- It outlines the philosophy that underpins this provision
- The policy is a working document and will be reviewed every two years
- The policy is a reflection of our current practice
- The policy is written in the context of the various pieces of legislation listed below;
 - The Education Act (1998)
 - The Education Welfare Act (2000)
 - The Equal Status Act (2000)
 - The Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (2003)
 - The Equality Act (2004)
 - The Data Protection Acts (1988, 1998 and 2003)
 - The Freedom of Education Acts (1997 and 2003)
 - The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)

This policy is drafted in the context of:

- DES Circular Letters
- The guidelines published by the NCSE 2017
- The guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process 2006
- The Guidelines on the Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools (NEPS)
- The guidelines published by the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SESS)

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices in:

- Identifying additional needs that our students may have
- Allocating resources to effectively meet the needs of students with additional needs in accordance with DES Circular No. 0014/2017
- Dividing the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to students with additional needs
- Tracking, monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the progress of students with additional needs
- Communicating information between the SET team, principal, staff and parents/guardians

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The BOM oversees:

- The development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN
- Adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources
- The inclusion of all students by ensuring that an awareness of SEN is instilled throughout the school community

Principal:

The NSCE Guidelines for Post Primary School, “*Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream School*”, states that the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The New Allocation Model states the principal’s leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school principal should:

- Promote inclusion by ensuring that an awareness of SEN is instilled in all of the school community
- Implement and monitor the school’s Special Education Needs policy on an on-going basis
- Establish a Special Education Teacher Team in the school to ensure identification of needs and support for students with SEN
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of students with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Assign responsibility for coordinating Special Educational Needs support to an identified teacher (i.e. SENCO)
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with the relevant stakeholders
- Source and interview SNAs who are then appointed by the BOM which will be reviewed annually based on the needs of SEN students
- Direct the work of SNAs in consultation with Deputy Principal responsible of SEN

SEN Co-ordinator:

The role of SEN co-ordinator is to liaise, communicate and collaborate with the SET team to ensure the implementation of the following roles:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs

- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist when necessary
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for students with additional needs
- Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet with parents/guardians regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents/guardians on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- Select students for external diagnostic assessment, where parental/guardian permission has been sought and granted
- Oversee the tracking system of test results to monitor the progress of students
- Maintain lists of students who are receiving additional support
- Advise and collaborate with SNAs around the care needs of relevant students
- Facilitate a weekly meeting of the SET team
- Be a member of a Pastoral Care Team
- Process applications for Reasonable Accommodation at State Examinations RACE
- Provide RACE for in House Exams, where possible, given the resources available
- Ensure that structured learning/care plans are in place for students with SEN
- Apply for SNA allocation based on the needs of SEN students

Class Teacher:

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should:

- Be aware of the school's policy and procedures (as outlined in this policy) for dealing with students with SEN, and ensure all students needs are met in line with the Continuum of Support
- Ensure that each student is taught in a stimulating and supportive classroom environment where all students feel equal and valued (Circular 0014/2017)
- Create opportunities for success for all
- Identify, respond to and refer students with additional needs to the SET team
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about a student and update them regarding their progress
- Gather information and assess students presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- Develop classroom support plans for students with additional needs who require **Classroom Support (New Model of Allocation)**
- Collaborate with SET Team to develop Student Support Plan and Learning Programmes or Group Profile and Learning Programmes for students who require **School Support (New Model of Allocation)**
- Collaborate with special education teachers, parents/guardians and relevant staff to develop priority learning goals and an Educational Support Plan for each student who requires **School Support Plus (New Model of Allocation)**
- Communicate with special education teachers, relevant staff and parents/guardians to review Educational Support Plan
- Where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching

- Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of students with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned

Special Needs Assistants:

The SNA acts in a care and support role that is non-teaching in nature and works under the guidance and supervision of the Principal and/or class teacher. The role and duties of the SNA are outlined in DES Circular (0030/2014). The SNA should:

- Support the needs of students in effectively accessing the curriculum
- Contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the students
- Support learning and teaching in the classroom
- Attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM
- Liaise with SEN team regularly
- Liaise with Deputy Principal responsible for SEN
- Attend student support plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- Maintain a record of support provided to their SEN student
- Assist and escort students on school trips
- Carry out, other appropriate duties as may be determined by the needs of the students and the school
- Be re- assigned to other appropriate work when special needs assistants are absent or when particularly urgent work demands arise
- Recognise their role in the health and safety of the student and in their social, emotional and educational development, without developing a culture of dependency
- Engage with parents of students with SEN as required and directed by school Management
- Treat all matters relating to school business and their work, as strictly confidential

Role of Guidance Counsellor

To work with the other members of the SEN team in facilitating the provision of education for students with SEN and their inclusion in the school. The Guidance Counsellor should:

- Provide counselling in personal, educational and career development
- Co-ordinate DATs
- Provide career information
- Consult with parents/guardians and staff
- Consult with community organisations
- Provide vocational preparation – job search skills, preparation for work experience
- Work closely with Year Heads and the SEN team to identify students requiring support
- Facilitate individual appointments for students in third year, TY and Leaving Cert Year to support them in making career decisions
- Advise students and parents on subject choice and subject load
- Liaise with students, parents and the SET team in relation to DARE, HEAR and UCAS applications

Parents/Guardians:

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning. Parent/Guardian should:

Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage

- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities

Students:

Students who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

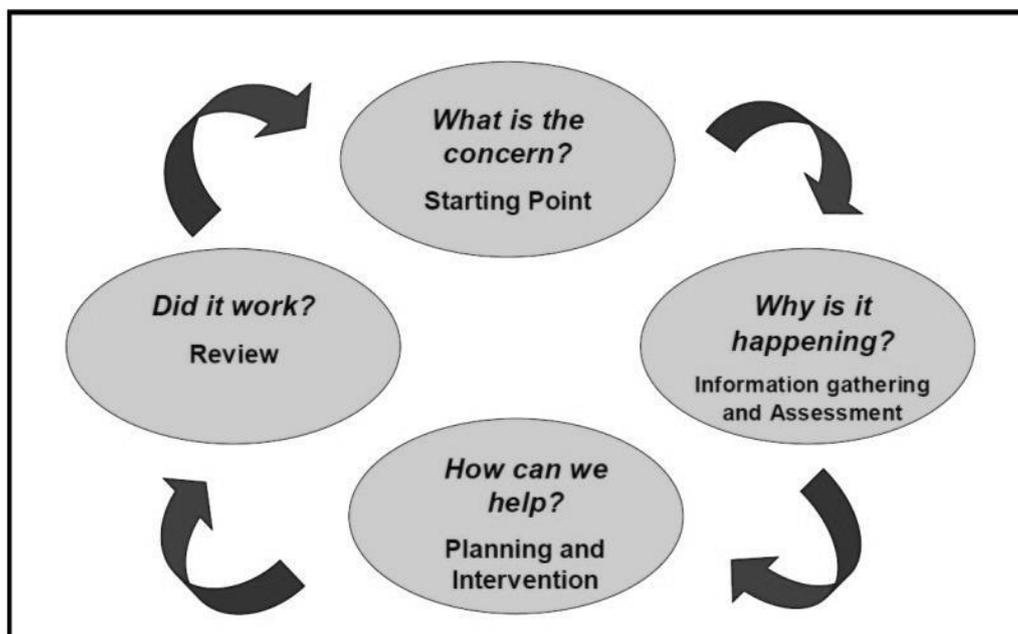
- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of their learning targets
- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

Continuum of Support

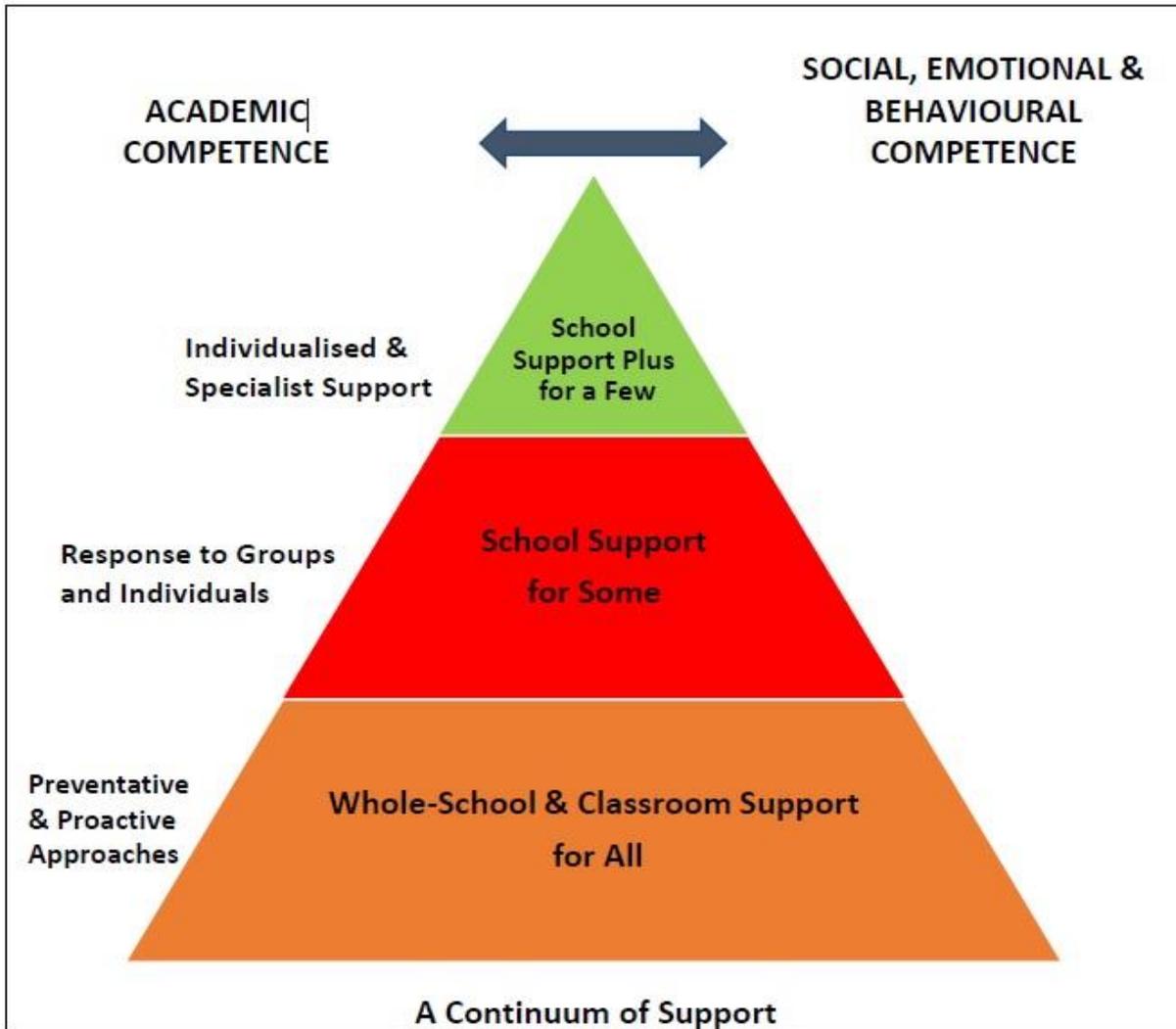
We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress. The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual students.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify student's educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, - sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support



Roles and Responsibilities

	Subject Teachers	Specialist teachers (learning support/ resource/ language (EAL*)/ guidance counsellors/ HSCL*/ tutors/ heads of year)	School Management
Whole School and Classroom Support for All Stage 1	Differentiate teaching and learning activities Create positive classroom environment, including use of positive and constructive feedback Assess & monitor progress Create opportunities for success Communicate concerns to SEN Team Collaborate with SET team	Collection and analysis of school-wide screening data, including in-take screening, transfer information, attendance and behavioural records Collaboration with subject teachers	Leadership in developing relevant whole school policies: enrolment/ assessment/ inclusion Strategic management of implementation of policies and practices Strategic support for evidence based interventions
School Support for Some Stage 2	As above, plus Contribute to group or individual planning and review Implement agreed strategies Communicate progress and concerns to SET team	As above plus Diagnostic testing Liaising with parents Gathering information from subject teachers/ other staff Plan, implement and review individual and/or group intervention Seek external professional advice, as needed Undertake tasks of coordinating teacher as needed	As above plus Assign roles and responsibilities Keep records of those receiving this level of support
School Support Plus for a Few Stage 3	As above plus Prepare information for student support planning meetings Implement individualised and specialist programmes and strategies Direct the work of SNAs* in the classroom	As above plus Plan, implement, monitor and review specialist and individualised responses Direct the work of SNAs in the school	As above plus Compliance with statutory requirements when EPSEN* is implemented.

*EAL- English as an Additional Language *SNA - Special Needs Assistant *HSCL – Home School Community Liaison *EPSEN - Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004

Meeting the Needs and Allocating Teaching and Learning Support

We acknowledge that there is a spectrum of ability and disability of every category of Special Educational Need in line with the New Model for Special Education Teaching Allocation – ‘the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support’.

Stage 2 School Support	Students with an identified need assessed by a professional Students with an emerging need assessed by SET team and or classroom teacher through informal and formal assessment Student on or under the 12 th Percentile in Literacy/Numeracy Standardised Test (CAT4) Student who is above the 12 th Percentile but has complex identified needs and will be allocated support on a case by case basis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Disability • Hearing Impairment • Visual Impairment • Emotional Disturbance • Borderline Mild/Mild/General Learning Disability • Severe/Profound General Learning Disability • Autistic Spectrum Disorder • Assessed Syndrome • Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment • Specific Learning Difficulty • EAL • Chronic Medical Conditions • Co-Morbid Condition 	Group or Student Support Plans and or Learning Programme	Type of Support Curricular Differentiation Curricular Reduction Team-Teaching Intervention Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal Inclusion of SNA Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher Guidance Counsellor SNA Outside Agencies

<p>Stage 3 School Support Plus</p>	<p>Students with identified complex needs who have received a diagnosis from a professional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Disability • Hearing Impairment • Visual Impairment • Emotional Disturbance • Moderate General Learning Disability • Severe/Profound General Learning Disability • Autistic Spectrum Disorder • ADHD • Assessed Syndrome • Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment • Specific Learning Difficulty • EAL • Chronic Medical Conditions • Co-Morbid Condition 	<p>Student Support Plans</p>	<p>Type of Support</p> <p>Curricular Differentiation Curricular Reduction Team-Teaching Intervention Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal Inclusion of SNA</p> <p>Personnel</p> <p>SET teacher Class Teacher Guidance Counsellor SNA Outside Agencies</p>
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Transfer from Primary School

The transfer of information from primary level to post-primary level is vital to the successful support of students with SEN. At the Open Night for prospective parents the importance of completing the specific form for the SET team is outlined.

Special Education Team also will:

- Visit or contact the feeder Primary Schools to collect relevant information on a case by case basis
- Liaise with the feeder primary school liaison officer to collect relevant information
- Liaise with primary school and parents of students with very specific needs who would benefit from more than one visit to the school
- Meet with the parent/guardian of students with SEN
- Establish communication with the primary school resource/learning support teacher
- Apply for SNA support/Assistive Technology for students for relevant needs

Once accepted to Loreto Secondary School:

- All incoming first year students take a Cognitive Ability Test; CAT 4. These tests can also be used to identify strengths and needs of incoming students with SEN. This data is used to help identify students who may need additional support, including exceptionally able students
- The SET team will ascertain the students learning style and strengths
- The SET team will make recommendations for students with Special Educational Needs at **Classroom Support Level** in consultation with all relevant stakeholders
- The SEN team will create learning targets for students with Special Educational Needs at **School Support Level and School Support Plus Level** in consultation with

all relevant stakeholders These targets are monitored and evaluated at regular intervals. Once achieved, new targets are set.

- At the beginning of each academic year all students on the SEN Register are reviewed individually in terms of type of support needed and curriculum load

Students transferring into other Year Groups

When a student is accepted into a year group other than First Year, information is sought from their previous school (Educational Psychological report, School reports, attendance, etc) This is the responsibility of the Principal/ Deputy Principal. Any relevant information is then passed to the Year Head and the Special Needs Team.

Provision of students with emerging needs

For students with emerging needs, including the exceptionally able, the concern may have been identified through the whole school screening and monitoring systems, informal and formal assessment, informal observation, parental/guardian concern. Teachers are asked to complete a referral form for students who they have a concern about that focuses on the student's behaviour, academic performance, homework etc. Some students will need further individual or diagnostic testing to identify the nature of their needs (both learning and behavioural). Parental consent is obtained before diagnostic tests are administered. Teachers are also encouraged to refer to students' CAT 4 results to determine the student's areas of strength and their needs and link with at least two other subject teachers before completing a referral form.

Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all students. In our school we carry out the following informal assessment procedures. Some methods include:

- 1st Year SEN Registration Form (6th Class)
- SET liaison meeting held in May for incoming First Year students with SEN
- SET visits Primary School when necessary
- Year Head Liaison Meeting held in May for incoming First Years
- Liaise with Primary School Liaison Officer
- Liaise with outside Agencies (Visiting Teacher Service, Mater CAMHS and CRC)
- Primary School Passport
- 1st Year Meeting held in October
- Student self-assessment
- Teacher observation
- Samples of work
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Student Checklist - 'My thoughts about school' (A Continuum of Support for Post – Primary Schools Resource Pack for Teachers)
- Subject Teacher Survey (A Continuum of Support for Post – Primary Schools Resource Pack for Teachers)
- Learning Environment checklist (A Continuum of Support for Post – Primary Schools Resource Pack for Teachers)
- Log of Actions File
- Subject Teacher Consultation
- Ongoing Parent consultation
- My Personal Profile, My English Profile and My Learning Profile
- Maths Competency Test

- Maths Language Test
- Maths Profile
- Communication and Language Assessment
- Social Skills Checklist
- Review of Summative Reports (Christmas and Summer)

The information gathered enables the teacher and SETs to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify students who may require supplementary teaching, formal assessment/screening is carried out in line with Circular 0035/2017 which includes:

- Cognitive Abilities Test – 4th Ed., 2012 (CAT4)
- Wide Range Intelligence Test 2000
- Diagnostic Reading Analysis 2008 2nd Ed.,
- Differential Aptitude Tests, DAT for guidance 1995
- New Group Reading Test 3rd Ed., 2010
- Hedderly Sentence Completion Test
- Drumcondra Post Primary Tests- Mathematics, 2013, 2016
- Drumcondra Post Primary Test – English Reading Literacy, 2013, 2016

The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and student support plans.

Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

Provision for Student with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process.

Student Support File

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is stored in the SEN Office in a locked Cabinet. All support files could include, based on the level of need, some or all of the following:

- Cover sheet with students details
- A timeline of actions
- Psychological Report
- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents/guardians outside agencies and inter- school meetings
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents/guardians outside agencies and school staff
- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
- Support plans (See below)

- Checklists

Support Plans

We use Student Support Plans for stage 2 and 3 and recommendations for stage 1

Stage 1 – Classroom Support

Recommendations at stage 1 is a **Classroom Support Plan**. This is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SET Team which outlines the student's special educational needs and which will recommend teaching and learning strategies and approaches. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their student's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school year.

Stage 2 – School Support

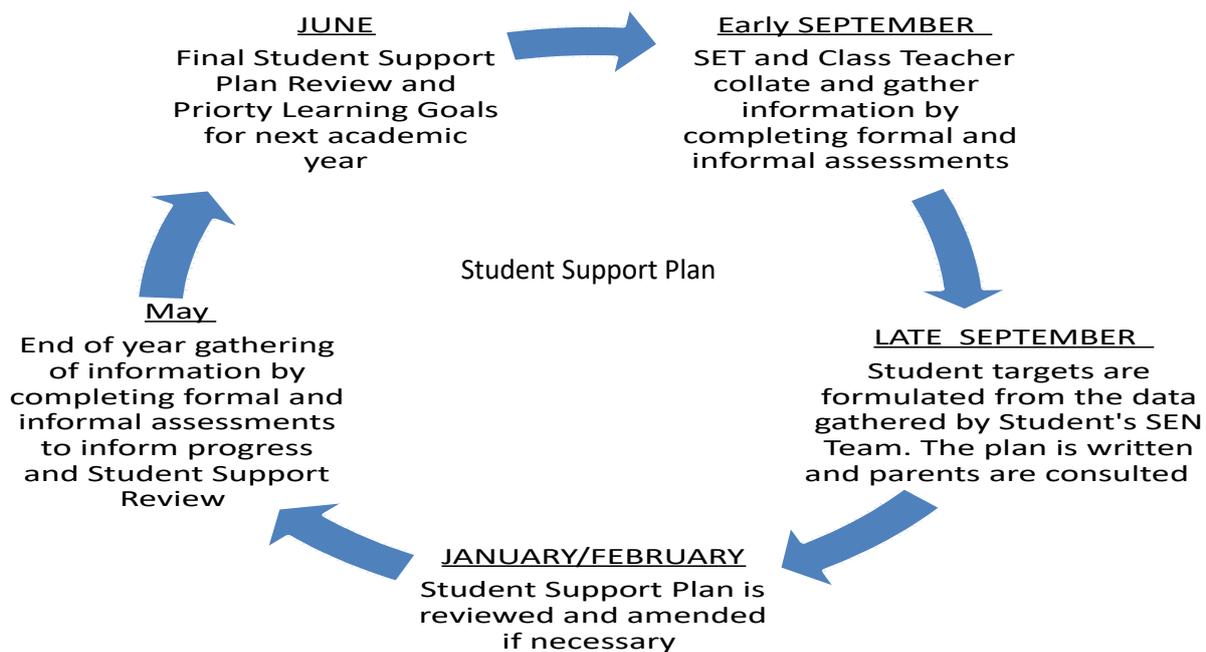
A Support Plan at stage 2 is a **Group or Student Support Plan and or Learning Programme**. This plan is drawn up by the SET Team in consultation with subject teachers where applicable. It will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the student's response to the actions taken.

Stage 3 – School Support Plus

The Student Support Plan is drawn up by the SET Team in consultation with subject teachers, parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and the student. Based on the information gathered It will set out;

- The nature and degree of the students abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those 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 including:
 - Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting
 - Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
 - Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
 - Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports, if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
 - Support required from a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if appropriate
 - The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months
 - The pupil's priority learning needs, long and short term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

Student Support meetings are coordinated by an appointed SET Team and relevant stakeholders. Parents/Guardians will be consulted.



Reasonable Accommodations for State and In House Examinations (RACE)

Applications are made by the SET team for RACE provision for students with SEN sitting a Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate Examination. Information relating to RACE is provided to parents on an annual basis. Accommodations available to students are applied for as per circular criteria. Accommodations are granted by the State Examinations Commission. The school will make applications for relevant accommodations for students who **meet the criteria as laid down by SEC** at Junior Cycle and these accommodations can be reactivated at Leaving Certificate, with the school being satisfied that the student still has a need for the accommodation. Further details are available in the RACE Guide for Exam Students 2018 at www.examination.ie.

Where resources permit and when deemed appropriate, readers, scribes and other accommodations are available to students who qualify for such accommodations at Mock Exams and other school assessments. Parents of students who are sitting a differentiated test in non-state examination years will be consulted.

Exemptions from Irish

- Incoming First Years with Irish Exemptions are noted
- Certificates from the study of Irish must be submitted with enrolment application
- The school will only consider granting an exemption for Irish when a written request is made by the student's parents and supported by an Educational Psychologist Report or other relevant documentation
- The guidelines set down by the Department of Education and Science will be strictly adhered to (Circular M10/94)
- Where possible, withdrawal for educational support is arranged for students with SEN, who do not study Irish, during Irish time. Allocation of support during Irish times will be adhered to through the following guideline, '**the students with the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**', based on the New Model of Allocation
- Applications for Irish Exemptions on grounds of SEN are made by SET team and signed by Principal

Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each student with SEN. When a place is offered to a student with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the student is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, student support plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Data Protection

- As per Data Protection Policy 2018, all SEN files, reviews, correspondence will be retained indefinitely

Supervision/Child Protection

- Where students receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both themselves and the student are visible through the glass panel in the door.

Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in April 2018

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from April 2018. It will be reviewed in June 2019 by the Special Education Team and relevant stakeholders pending a proposed review of the New SEN Allocation Model by the Department of Education and Science in 2019.

Signed:



(Chairperson)