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Gurraneasig N.S.

Kilbrittain,

Co. Cork

P72 YP78

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

Introduction

Gurraneasig National School is a co-educational mainstream primary school catering for children from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

The purpose of this policy is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs.

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

- 1 Full-time Special Education Teachers (SET)
- 1 Shared Special Education Teacher (SET)
- 1 Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

Aims of SEN Support

Our school is committed to helping students to achieve their full potential. The provision of quality SEN support teaching is integral to this commitment.

Through the implementation of our SEN policy we aim to

- support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school
- provide students with consistent opportunities to experience success
- ensure that the Stage Approach/Continuum of Support is implemented (see below)
- optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable children with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school (Guidelines for Schools, P15)
- protect and enhance all students self-esteem
- support appropriate differentiation in the classroom
- support children's development both socially and emotionally
- enable children to understand themselves as learners
- involve parents in supporting their children
- promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for our students

The Continuum of Support

In Gurraneasig NS we employ a staged approach to supporting students. The NEPS Continuum of Support provides a structure for this.

Stage 1: Classroom Support

The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in their class. A classroom support plan is developed for those students who require ongoing support. A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

This plan may be informed by:

- Parental consultation
- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Basic needs checklist*
- Learning environment checklist*
- Pupil consultation - My thoughts About School checklist

- Literacy and numeracy tests

*These checklists are available in the Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers

If insufficient progress is made and the student is still having difficulty then Stage 2 (School Support) is implemented

Stage 2: School Support

If further intervention is deemed necessary and the child is to receive supplementary teaching at School Support Level, a letter of consent will be sent to the parents by the SEN teacher in question. The class teacher and SET Teacher collaborate and draw up a plan of appropriate learning outcomes for the student. The students' parents/guardians will be informed of this plan, invited to contribute and then asked to sign the agreed plan. A review will take place at the end of the instructional period.

This plan may be informed by

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Parent and Pupil interviews
- Learning environment checklist
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy and numeracy
- Formal observation of behaviour

Stage 3: School Support Plus

Some students who continue to present with significant learning needs will require more intensive intervention. The school may formally request a consultation and where appropriate, an assessment from an outside specialist in respect of students with learning difficulties or challenging behaviour who have failed to progress at Stage 2. Such specialist advice may be sought from psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists, audiologists etc. This is done in consultation with and with the expressed permission of the students' parents / guardians.

The classroom teachers and the SET, in consultation with the relevant specialist(s), will draw up a learning programme that includes identification of any additional resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the programme.

This plan may also be informed by

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed measures
- Parent and Pupil interviews
- Functional assessment
- Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc

In some cases, pupils identified at an early age as having significant special educational needs, intervention at Stage 3 will be necessary on their enrolment to school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting learning is the collaborative responsibility of all. It is envisaged that the Board of Management, Principal, Classroom Teachers, Special Education Teacher, External Agencies/Professionals, Parents & Students will all contribute to the development and implementation of the school's policy on Special Educational Needs.

Board of Management

The Board of Management will

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN Policy
- Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation and teaching resources are available
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to children in receipt of SEN support

Principal

The Principal will

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals / agencies

- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils 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.

The Classroom Teacher

The Classroom teacher will

- have primary responsibility for the education, progress and care of all students in his/her classroom, including students with special educational and additional needs.
- support the identification of learning difficulties
- provide Classroom Support/Stage 1.
- maintain a log of actions
- communicate with parents/guardians
- draw up Classroom Support Plans (Stage 1 Continuum of Support)
- Collaborate with the SET in the development of a Support Plan for each child who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus Level on the continuum.

The SEN Teacher

The SET will

- Provide supplementary teaching commensurate with the child's particular and individual needs.
- Research the child's learning needs/SEN, to become familiar with their needs and their preferred learning methods
- Be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs (Guidelines 2017, P13).
- Develop a Support Plan for each child who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with Class Teachers and parents.
- Maintain a Short-Term Plan and Progress Record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of children withdrawn for support teaching.
- Administer a range of formal and informal assessments and maintain records of the outcomes of those assessments
- Maintain a log of actions
- Deliver early intervention programmes.
- Assist the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Contribute to the development of the SEN policy.
- Meet with parents of children who are in receipt of support teaching where a concern is ongoing.
- Liaise with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc and implement suitable recommendations, wherever possible.

SNA

SNA's will carry out duties based on the needs of the students. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature (circular 0030/2014).

Parents

Parents will contribute by sharing insights into their child's development and learning difficulties, by discussing the outcomes of the assessment and by contributing to the selection of learning targets and associated activities based on the child's needs.

Students

The student will contribute by being an active participant in their own learning; the extent and nature of this will depend on their strengths and needs.

External Agencies / Professionals

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENOs), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Early Intervention Teams, School Age Teams, Tusla, Visiting Teachers for children with vision/ hearing impairment, and the Inspectorate. We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. We also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Prevention Strategies

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.
- Development and implementation of agreed approaches to the teaching of Primary Language and Mathematics Curriculum to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Careful development of phonological awareness, rhyming skills and oral language skills, before formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials as much as possible and appropriate.
- Ongoing structure observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of children in the Infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Class -based early intervention by the class teacher focusing on the provision of additional individualised support, as and when required.
- Provision of additional support in language development/early literacy/early mathematical skills to children who need it.
- Support for children experiencing social/emotional difficulties and problems with concentration.
- Provision of Assistive Technology as appropriate.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents / guardians of incoming Junior Infants and the arrangement of formal and informal parent/teacher meetings

Early Intervention Strategies

Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and/or the Support Teacher, in accordance with the Staged Approach (NEPS Continuum). Collaboration and consultation between the Class Teachers and the Support Teachers, should identify children who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of children for early intervention programmes at Classroom Support/School Support level.

Early Intervention Strategies will include:

- Active learning programme for all Junior Infant children with specific emphasis on oral language development, underpinned by the principles of the *Aistear* programme and the new language curriculum.
- Early intervention literacy and language support programme (Guided Reading using Levelled Readers) in Junior Infants to 1st classes daily.
- Withdrawal of children to a support teaching room, in class support, team teaching, group work and individual support will be provided, as appropriate and it is in the child's best interest.

Identifying and selecting children for additional teaching support

Children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used by our school to select children for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 13/2017).

- Children previously in receipt of "Resource hours" who continue to experience significant learning difficulties.
- Children scoring at or below the 10th percentile on standardised assessments in Literacy and Maths.
- Children diagnosed or presenting as having Special Additional Needs.
- Children diagnosed with or presenting as having specific learning difficulties.
- Children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and whose English needs further support.
- Early intervention in literacy and or Maths - Infant class children who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy skills, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support Stage (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Children scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessment in literacy and/or Maths and who continue to experience difficulty, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Children experiencing difficulties with oral language or social or emotional development or application to learning, despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Transition to Post-Primary School.
- Exceptionally Able/Gifted Children.

Interventions will be made in the first instance by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support(Stage1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support. The class teacher will open a Support Plan and record the interventions in it. Support from Centre for Talented youth Ireland will be accessed as appropriate

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be reviewed following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.
- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan.
- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child need scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group.

Monitoring Progress

- The Support Review will be completed by the Support Teacher in collaboration with the Class Teacher. This will be carried out at the end of each instructional period. The completed review will be saved in Aladdin (our school administration system)
- Termly Assessments (if applicable)
- Weekly Assessments (if applicable)
- Diagnostic Tests (if applicable)
- Screening Tests (if applicable)
- Standardised Tests at the end of the school year.
- Ongoing teacher observation

Record Keeping

A full record of psychological reports, other reports and records of meetings are kept in the individual student's file in a central, secure location in the school. A digitised version of these files are kept on the school's secure online management system; Aladdin. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts.

Parental Engagement

We recognise the vital role of parents as primary educators in supporting their child and appreciate that parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for students with special educational needs. Parents are consulted in relation to their children's needs and the strategies being implemented to support them. They are also involved in reviewing their child's progress. We recognise

and respect the parent/guardian's right to choose not to avail of the recommended support for their child. In such circumstances, parents will be requested to inform the principal in writing confirming their position.

Timetabling

When devising timetables, the classroom teacher and SET will ensure that all students who are withdrawn for support sufficiently experience all areas of the curriculum, insofar as is practicable

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

As all staff members have responsibility for supporting students with special educational needs, it is important that all staff engage in appropriate CPD to develop the capacity of our school to meet the needs of all students.

The Principal & BOM facilitate the attendance of the staff at CPD courses and events.

Ratified by Board of Management on :

Signed Mary O'Driscoll
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 27/02/24

This Policy will be reviewed as required.