

# Templederry National School

Templederry NS



Ph: 0504 52308  
Twitter: @templderryns  
E-mail: tderryns@gmail.com

estd: 1962

# Special Educational Needs Policy

Reviewed October 2024

## Introduction

The aim of Templederry NS is to promote the fullest possible development of every child as a whole person. To help achieve this ideal, Templederry NS provides a broad education in line with the curriculum guidelines for Primary Schools, including coherent and practical planning for the inclusion of children with special needs, allowing each child to reach the highest level of academic attainment consistent with his or her abilities or talents, so that the school community is enriched by the unique gifts and talents of all its students.

Templederry NS recognises that the parents/guardians are the primary educators and that it is only through co-operation between them and the school that our ideal can be realised. This mission statement is fully in keeping with the 1998 Education Act and EPSEN 2004

### 1998 Education Act

*'To make provision for the education of every person in the State, including any person with a disability or who has other special educational needs respect diversity spirit of partnership between schools, patrons, students, parents, teachers and other school staff, the community.'*

### Education for People with Special Education Needs Act (EPSEN 2004)

*'A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature of those needs is such that to do so would be inconsistent with (a) the best interests of the child, or 3 (b) the effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated In line with our ethos and official Department of Education and Skills (DES) recommendations, learning support strategies will actively seek to include the diverse range of cultures and abilities of its students.'*

### Disability Act (2005)

The Assessment of Need (AON) is a statutory process under the Disability Act (2005) whereby the Health Service Executive (HSE) reports on the health and education needs of a child/young person. All children/young people born on or after 1st June 2002 are eligible to apply for an Assessment of Need (AON) under the Disability Act (2005).

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, and other relevant parties on the effective teaching support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/ or learning/ social/ emotional difficulties, as well as to fulfil relevant legislative and procedural responsibilities. This policy relates to pupils enrolled in mainstream classes.

In developing this policy particular consideration was given to the

- Learning Support Guidelines
- DES circulars including 0013/2017
- NEPS: A Continuum of Support
- Circular 0025/2024 Report of Education Need for the Purpose of the Assessment of Need Disability Act 2005
- Circular 0080/2024 New measures to support the Forward Planning for Special Education Provision

Guidelines, procedures, and advice provided by the National Psychology Service (NEPS), National Council for Special Education (NCSE), Special Education Support Service (SESS) and Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) also contributed to this policy.

## **School Context**

Templederry NS is a co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Killaloe

## **Guiding Principles**

- Implementation of effective whole-school policies
- Setting suitable learning challenges and differentiating the level of work as a means of responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- A comprehensive programme of screening, assessment, and identification of pupils' additional learning needs
- The implementation of a comprehensive Prevention & Early Intervention Programme
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need
- Co-ordination of referrals to relevant external services where appropriate.

## **Aims & Objectives**

The principal aim of special education needs Support in Templederry N.S. is to provide a positive learning environment, which will foster the academic, social and emotional development of students with learning difficulties. Special education needs support provision also seeks to:

- To ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have opportunity of access to an appropriate education
- To set out the whole-school approach to teaching and learning of pupils with additional learning needs/ special education needs (SEN)
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child(ren) in the school
- To develop a partnership with parents and/ or guardians
- To promote an inclusive environment in the school
- To outline the procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning needs of pupils with additional learning needs/ special education needs
- To use the SEN teaching resources effectively, efficiently and in line with best practice
- To enable pupils with additional needs/ SEN to share, with their peers, as complete and inclusive an educational experience as possible
- To optimise the teaching and learning processes to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency, insofar as it is possible and considering pupils' overall ability levels, in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

In attempting to achieve these aims and objectives the school will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements set out in this policy.

### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management has a significant role in overseeing the development, review and implementation of the SEN Policy. This includes:

- Review and discuss standardised test results in accordance with Circular 56/2011
- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the policy
- Ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided
- Provide adequate funds for the purchase of materials
- Provide a secure facility for the storage of records
- Ensure where required ample time is given to teachers within their daily schedule to complete forms/referrals etc. as they arise or as they are required.

### **Principal:**

The *Learning Support Guidelines (2000, P.39)* outline 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

The school principal should:

- Implement and monitor the school's Special Educational Needs policy on an on-going basis
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Coordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- 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
- Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher (i.e. SENCO)
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser) and other organisations including but not exclusively NEPS
- Oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents

- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of Special Education Teaching
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress

### **SEN Co-ordinator:**

The SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) should:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- Consult with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- Consult with SETs to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- Oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support on the Continuum of Support
- Inform special education teachers or class teachers of any upcoming CPD that may be of benefit
- Co-ordinate the timetabling of whole class early intervention initiatives.

### **Special Education Teacher-SETs**

SET's from the SEN team will be assigned to specific classes. They should:

- Regularly meet with class teachers to discuss the needs of the pupils in their class
- Maintain a record of these meetings and decisions made
- Advise the class teacher, where needed, of possible interventions to meet the needs of their pupils
- Support the class teacher in creating a Student Support File once additional support is implemented
- Support the class teacher in the writing of classroom support plans
- Where requested by the class teacher, meet parents to discuss moving a child from classroom support to school support or when referring to an outside agency
- Communicate with the SENCO and the SET team regarding any concerns raised by class teachers at SET team planning meetings
- Update and maintain class SEN records and test results
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs

- Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- Collaboratively develop school support plans for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- Meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians, and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require a
- Collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff to develop an individual education plan/support plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- Regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review support plans
- Meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review support plans
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- Support whole-school procedures for screening
- Administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload
- Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received.
- Maintain short term planning for those in receipt of support teaching

#### **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:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, enable the children with learning difficulties to make progressive steps in their learning at a level that is compatible with their current ability
- Create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- Administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines
- Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SETs to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- Gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- Open a Student Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support

- Collaborate with staff to develop School Support Files for each pupil in receipt of School Support from their class
- Meet with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an Individual Education Plan/support plan
- Collaborate with Special Education Teachers and relevant staff to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP)/School Support Plus Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- Meet regularly with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff and parents to review support plan
- Where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- Co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned
- Liaise with and seek advice from the SENCO

### **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.

They 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
- Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage.

### **Pupils:**

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

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term 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
- Maintain adequate levels of attendance and punctuality
- Complete school-work and homework to the best of their ability

### **Other Professionals**

Other professionals such as Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychiatrists, Behavioural Therapists and Visiting

Teachers etc. may be involved through assessments, needs identification, therapeutic intervention and offering consultation and advice in relation to appropriate approaches and interventions.

## **A Whole-School Approach**

Good practice in the identification of need, education planning, and allocation of special education teaching is supported through effective whole-school planning. This following section outlines the key elements of the inclusive whole-school approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs in Templederry N.S.

### **Inclusive Education**

The NCSE (2011) described inclusion as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners. It involves removing barriers so that each learner will be enabled to achieve the maximum benefit from his/her schooling.

We believe that the whole-school approach to special educational needs provision in Templederry N.S. should reflect the Department's commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. The whole school approach of Templederry N.S. endeavours to foster an inclusive culture which is characterised by:

- A positive ethos and learning environment whereby all pupils, including those with special educational needs, feel welcome and experience a sense of community and belonging
- An emphasis on promoting pupils' participation and active engagement in their learning and in the life of the school
- A commitment to developing pupils' academic, social, emotional and independent living skills
- A focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for all pupils

### **Whole School Planning**

When implementing the revised allocation model to address the needs of pupils with special educational needs, Templederry N.S. has adopted a whole-school approach to programme planning and to the implementation of early-intervention and prevention programmes. In order to achieve this, Templederry N.S. has adapted their existing special educational needs policies to guide the new approach to the allocation of resources.

A whole-school approach involves collaborative action by our school community (in consultation with parents, pupils, SNAs, class teachers, SETs, Principal) to improve pupil learning, behaviour, and well-being. It encompasses a process of reflection, planning and review of policies and practices, and includes an evaluation of how pupils with special educational needs are identified by the school, the interventions that are put in place to meet their needs and how the outcomes of those interventions are measured and monitored.

The whole-school approach in Templederry N.S. addresses the full continuum of needs - ranging from milder and more transient needs to difficulties that are severe and enduring (for example, significant learning, sensory, physical, communication, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties). The school management of Templederry N.S. recognises that a small minority of pupils

with significant and enduring needs may require a more specialist setting (for example, special class or special school placement).

### Admission Policy for Pupils with SEN

The Department of Education acknowledges the significant progress made by schools in developing inclusive practices and provision whereby the vast majority of pupils with special educational needs now attend mainstream schools. It also recognises that a small minority of pupils with significant and enduring needs may require a more specialist setting (for example, special class or special school placement). Templeberry N.S. 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'*. No child will be refused admission to Templeberry N.S. solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

The Admission Policy for pupils with SEN is as follows:

- The BOM, through the principal, has the right to request a copy of the child's medical/psychological report or where such a report is not available guide parents towards engaging with the relevant agencies.
- The purpose of this assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the education and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability and special needs and to profile the support services required.
- Following receipt of the report the principal will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report.
- Where the principal advises the BOM that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment request the Department of Education and Science (DES) or National Council for Special Education (NCSE see Circular 01/05)) to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological or medical report. These resources may include for example access to or the provision of any of a combination of the following: visiting teacher service, resource teacher for special needs, SNA, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services or other. It will be necessary for the BOM of Templeberry N.S. to identify health and safety issues arising from the enrolment of a special needs child, for example, access, toilets, supervision and administering of medicine
- The school will meet with the parents or attend a full case conference involving all parties if requested.
- It may be necessary for the BOM to decide to defer enrolment of a particular child pending the provision of appropriate resources (EPSEN Act 2004).
- SEN children will be fully integrated unless it is inconsistent with the best interests of the child with effective educational provision for other children. (EPSEN 2004)
- The Education Act 1998 states that the BOM must ensure that the educational needs of all students must be identified and provided for

- Under the Disability Bill 2004 schools must ensure to promote equality and social inclusion for all. It is important to promote and foster in school communities an environment that encourages pupils to attend school and to participate fully in school life. (Education Welfare Act 2000).

### **Early Intervention & Prevention of Learning Difficulties**

In view of the substantial international evidence that early-intervention and prevention programmes can lead to improved outcomes for pupils, school leaders should ensure that some teaching resources are used for this purpose. After engaging in a process of self-reflection and review, they will become aware of whole-school issues that may be addressed through early-intervention programmes, which are evidence-based and which are responsive to the local context.

Templederry N.S. endeavours to develop and trial new approaches and to use assessment data to evaluate the efficacy of these interventions. We believe that developing and sharing successful practice has the potential to contribute to improvements in the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs.

At times, Templederry N.S. may deploy additional teaching resources in junior classes to strengthen station teaching approaches which target the promotion of language, literacy and numeracy skills. The use of early-intervention and prevention programmes helps mitigate the development of learning, social and emotional difficulties.

Templederry N.S. recognises the importance of seeking advice and training in well-validated programmes to address behavioural and emotional needs.

All intervention programmes are carefully monitored to assess and record their impact on pupil progress, participation in learning and in school life. These programmes are implemented in an intensive manner, for the purpose intended and includes frequent opportunities for pupils to practise skills.

### **Identification of Special Educational Needs**

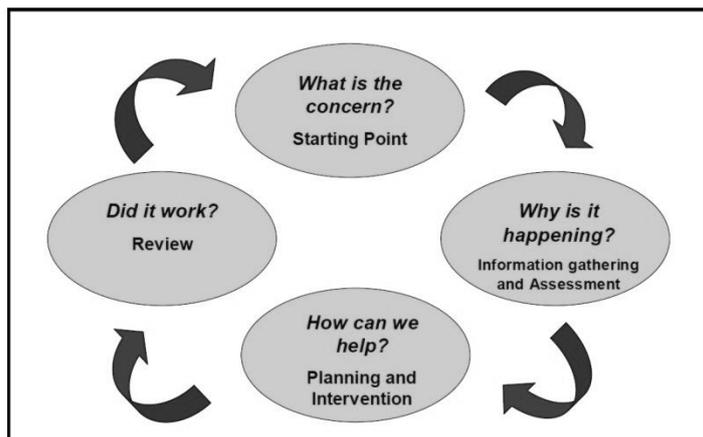
#### **Continuum of Support**

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 pupils require various 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 pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:

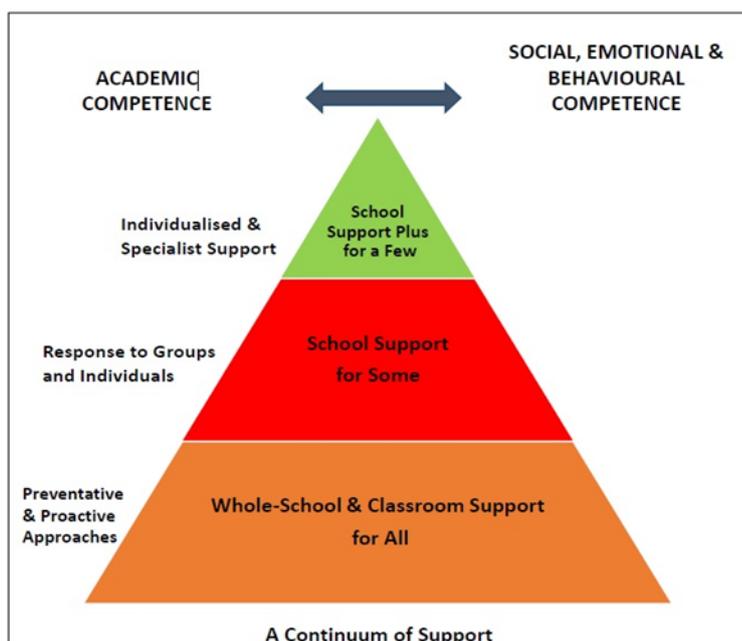
Identification of central to our policy model. By using the framework, we can educational needs, social and well as needs physical, sensory, communication



educational needs is and the new allocation Continuum of Support identify pupils' to include academic, emotional needs, as associated with language and difficulties. This, in

turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

### Step 1 - The Continuum of Support



In Templederry N.S. a three-step process is in place to guide identification, intervention and monitoring of outcomes for pupils with special educational needs.

Templederry N.S. uses the Continuum of Support framework set out by the Department of Education to assist in identifying and responding to pupils' needs. This framework recognises that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require distinct levels of support depending on their identified educational needs. Using this framework helps to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and that they are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables the staff in Templederry N.S. to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

Identification of educational needs is central to the new model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, the staff in Templederry N.S. can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. The framework emphasises the importance of looking at a pupil's needs in context and provides useful resources to support this (for example, Learning Environment Checklist, Teacher Checklist for Whole-class Structures and Supports).

The Continuum of Support enables schools to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way. This means that needs can be responded to as early as possible. Of course, the principle that pupils with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support is of primary importance. This approach is also supported by information and engagement with external professionals, as required.

### Level 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 and / or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.

This is 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
- Screening tests of language skills

A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period and is subject to review.

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

### **Level 2 - School Support**

At this level, a Support Plan is devised and informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures / assessments
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Learning environment checklist
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures
- Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition.

A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period and is subject to review.

### **Level 3 - School Support Plus**

This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals and may include:

- Teacher observation and 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.

Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.

### **Educational planning**

Provision for pupils 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. In Templederry N.S., the process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, special needs assistants, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. Interventions draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests.

Support plans set out

- the agreed targets

- the resources required
- the strategies for implementation
- time-frame for review.

## **Student Support File**

A Student Support File Template has been developed by the staff in Templederry N.S. to enable the school to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.

As special educational needs can vary from mild to transient to significant and enduring, educational planning reflect the level of need of the individual pupil. In this regard, the Student Support File facilitates a graduated response across the different levels of the Continuum: Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus. For pupils with significant, enduring and complex needs, collaboration with external professionals, including multi-disciplinary teams, will be engaged to work with the child (for example, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist and psychologist).

## **Step 2 - Meeting the Needs**

Having identified a pupil's needs and the educational planning required to meet those needs, this second step emphasises the importance of effective teaching and learning strategies.

### **The role of the class teacher**

Effective teaching and learning are critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, classroom teachers plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. They adapt their teaching approaches as the need arises for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. All mainstream class teachers in Templederry N.S. implements teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

In Templederry N.S. we believe that every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence are gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers regularly differentiate their lessons. This is achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers in Templederry N.S. make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This, at times, requires environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

### **The role of the Special Education Teacher (S.E.T.)**

Special education teachers in Templederry N.S. are familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions are based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment, when necessary.

Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support plan. Short-term planning reflects the Support Plan targets and break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis. Outcomes for pupils are routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes are also used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

### **Target-setting**

We believe that good target-setting is central to effective teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs. In Templederry N.S. targets are expressed in a way that is measurable and observable and reflect the specific special educational needs of individual pupils (for example, focus on social and emotional difficulties if that is a primary area of concern). The teachers endeavour to set targets which are achievable within a specified time frame and also challenge and build on existing knowledge and address pupils' holistic needs.

Best practice indicates that **targets** should be:

- few in number
- strengths based
- informed by priority learning needs
- directly linked to suitable interventions
- based on the evidence collected through both formal and informal assessment approaches
- developed collaboratively - teachers in Templeberry N.S. consult with parents when setting targets and reviewing progress.
- The views of pupils are also included in this process, through their direct involvement in the discussion or by gathering their views in advance of the review process. We believe that this collaboration will help ensure that targets are relevant, meaningful, realistic, and that they draw on the strengths and interests of pupils.

### **Step 3 - Monitoring and recording outcomes for pupils with special educational needs**

This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This leads to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe.

Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn leads to adjustments in support plans. The Student Support File provides the teachers in Templeberry N.S. with a useful resource to support and record this process. It includes a Support Review Record to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and pupils. We believe that such monitoring of progress, and subsequent adaptation of support plans, are key drivers of effective practice.

In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, we believe that it is also important to review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level. This review includes measures of attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for pupils with special educational needs.

### **Planning the allocation of special education teaching supports**

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with the highest level of need will have access to the greatest level of support. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development and application to learning.

Templeberry N.S. uses the following actions to decide on how to allocate special education teaching supports.

#### **Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs**

- Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data, and any information from parents and external professionals.
- Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests)

- Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school.
- Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.

### **Action 2: Setting targets**

- Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support.

### **Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches**

- Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the Continuum of Support.
- Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching.
- They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.

### **Action 4: Organising early- intervention and prevention programmes**

Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.

### **Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources**

Cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.

### **Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress**

Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:

- At whole-school and Classroom Support level by all teachers
- At the School Support and School Support Plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers

## **Screening & Assessment**

All teachers will use informal methods of assessment to ascertain the level of need of children in their class on an ongoing basis. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to identify need and plan strategies and set targets to meet that need.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is conducted in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans.

The following list outlines some of the key screening and assessment measures that are used at the school to help identify pupils who are, or may be, at risk of learning difficulties. These assessments also help to identify the specific areas of need for pupils.

### Whole-Group Screening & Standardised Assessments

The following screening measures will be used at whole-class level as follows and for the following purposes:

Test	Class Level	Purpose
MIST; BIAP	Senior Infants	To identify 5 & 6 year olds who are at risk of literacy failure
JOLST	Senior Infants	To measure a child's language
BAS; Burt Word Reading test Schonell Word Reading Test	Senior Infants & First Class (Second Class)	To measure a child's word reading skills and reading achievement
PM Benchmark 1	Senior Infants & First Class (Second Class)	Identifies the instructional reading level and comprehension level of a child (1-30)
RAIN	Second Class	To assess and monitor reading and comprehension phonemic awareness
Drumcondra Reading and Spelling	Senior Infants – Sixth Class	To provide information on the reading levels of pupils and compare reading performances with general ability
Drumcondra Primary Maths Test - Revised	Senior Infants – Sixth Class	To provide information on the mathematical levels of pupils and compare ability in maths with general ability

### Diagnostic Tests

The SEN team may use the following diagnostic tests to further investigate the learning abilities and needs of pupils referred following classroom-based assessment and screening tests:

Dyslexia screening test, Diagnostic spelling test, WIAT, Jackson Phonics, DRA, DSA, YARC, BIAP.

## Parental Consent

Parental consent will be sought prior to Support Teaching on stage 2 commencing. In recent years consent for diagnostic testing has been received from parents at the beginning of each year on the Aladdin portal.

## Timetabling

- The SENCO will create timetables in September with slots in place for children at School Support Plus level on each SET Timetable.
- Slots for whole class initiatives will also be placed in timetables.
- Slots needed for support for Literacy and Numeracy based on assessments will also be placed on timetables.
- SETs and classroom teachers can move slots around to suit the children's needs and the teacher's class timetable.
- The principal and SET will constantly review the timetables to ensure those who need the most support are in receipt of it.
- Where possible children should not miss the same subject each time they are withdrawn. If a child has an exemption for Irish then we will endeavour to take this into account where feasible.
- If a pupil is unavailable for their supplementary session due to special circumstances, the Special Education Teacher will attempt to reschedule the session with the cooperation of another teacher.
- Interruptions to classes/classrooms should be kept to a minimum.

## Communication

### Communication with Class Teachers

- The SEN teacher will be in regular informal liaison with the class teacher.

### Communication with Parents

- Parent meetings will be held once a year to meet with parents of children with SEN. A second meeting though not always possible can be organised in June to further discuss pupils progress.
- If a parent or teacher has any concerns, an appointment can be made to discuss
- A communication copy can be kept to inform parents, where appropriate
- Communication will be between parents and class teacher / SEN teacher / principal. The SNA must refer all matters on curriculum, classroom management, discipline etc. to the classroom teacher. SNA and teacher should be alert to parent seeking educational type information on a casual basis. All such information should only be given out by the teacher. Communication between the SNA and parent during the morning and afternoon handover should be brief in nature and only relating to the wellbeing of the pupil. SNAs will refer parents to the class teacher if parents attempt to communicate with them regarding children for an extended length of time.

### Communication with BOM

- The BOM will be kept informed of the SEN provision by the principal.

### Whole-School Collaboration

- SEN issues will appear on the agenda of staff meetings and post holders meetings when necessary. The principal will coordinate this process.

#### Communication with outside agencies

- Regular liaison with outside agencies will be maintained by the principal and the SEN teachers.

#### Communication with principal

- The principal will be in regular contact with all members of SEN staff.

### **Supervision/Child Protection**

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both they and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

### **Record-Keeping**

A full record of psychological reports and other reports are stored in the principal's office. A copy of these is kept in the relevant Special Education Teachers room in a locked cabinet. Support files and records of meetings are kept in the individual student's file on Aladdin. All information is managed in accordance with the directives of both the Freedom of Information and General Data Protection Regulations.

### **Exemptions from Irish**

The School Management of Templederry N.S. follows the directions laid out in Circular 0054/2022 when considering Irish exemptions.

### **Continuation and Discontinuation**

'The progress of each pupil who is in receipt of such teaching should be evaluated at the end of each instructional term, and, following consultation with the pupil's class teacher and parents, a decision should be taken about the level of support that can be provided by the learning-support teacher in the future. Depending on the pupil's needs, this may range from infrequent monitoring and assessment to more frequent and intensive supplementary teaching. The school's policy on continuation/ discontinuation and the way in which it is implemented will have implications for the number of additional pupils who can be provided with supplementary teaching for the first time in each instructional term' (Learning Support Guidelines).

A meeting will be held at the beginning of the school year and at the end of each instructional term (e.g. January and June) with the parents in cases where supplementary teaching is to be commenced or continued to discuss the learning targets and activities in the pupil's support plan. Supplementary teaching will normally be discontinued where the targets have been met and the pupil (on assessment) is performing above the percentile laid down in the criteria for receiving learning-support.

The school's procedure in relation to discontinuing support teaching/ discharging pupils from support teaching is as follows:

- a) Discharge from Special Educational Provision
  - i. In general, pupils will be discharged no later than the end of the 2nd instructional term in 6<sup>th</sup> class
  - ii. Children may also be discharged from Learning Support in the following circumstances:
    - Children with diagnosed specific learning difficulties (SLDs) or high incidence disabilities who are consistently performing above the cut-off scores
    - Where a child, following a sustained period of support teaching is performing to his/ her ability level as determined by reference to attainment and cognitive ability assessments, and has achieved adequate/ expected levels of competency in language, literacy and numeracy

Discharge from learning support may involve the provision of a differentiated support programme for the pupil(s) which would include steps to be implemented in the classroom and home setting.

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. It will be reviewed every three years unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier.

The BoM will ensure that SEN provision is an integral part of the school development plan and will evaluate the effectiveness and success of this policy by monitoring:

- The standards obtained by children with special needs
- The number of children at each of the three stages: differentiation within class, school action and resource
- The level and pattern of help (i.e. average time allocated and the balance of in-class and withdrawal support)
- Views of parents
- Visits from specialist teachers
- Staff views on in-service
- Children's views

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Templeberry N.S at its meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson,  
Board of Management

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Signed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

\_\_\_\_\_

Date