

# **St. Louise de Marillac Primary School**

## **Special Educational Needs Policy**

**June 2013**

### **Introductory Statement**

Policies in relation to learning support existed in St. Louise's Junior and Senior schools since the publication of the Department of Education Learning Support Guidelines in 2000. These policies were updated and revised in line with Department of Education and Skills and NEPS publications (Circular 24/03). Following the amalgamation of our two schools in January 2011, it was necessary to review the two existing SEN policies and revise, update and amend procedures as necessary and appropriate. This policy will reflect recent changes i.e. pupil numbers, staffing, resources, etc. It will clarify aspects of SEN policy for pupils, staff and parents.

It will address the continuity of education and service for SEN pupils and ensure a high standard of attention to their specific needs.

This policy was formulated during January to May 2013. The policy was drawn up in consultation with teachers, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), Home School Liaison Teacher (HSCL) and parents/ guardians.

### **Rationale**

- The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines and information for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of effective learning support for pupils experiencing low achievement and/or those with learning difficulties.
- It will assist parents/ guardians in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- It is also intended to fulfil our obligations under The Education Act (1998) and to comply with legislation and DES circulars.
- Staff members are alert to the changing needs of pupils throughout the year. This policy will outline the procedures the school employs so that when a pupil presents with special education needs, a prompt and effective response can be put in place.
- It is necessary to revisit the SEN policy regularly as the enrolment of children with a range of special needs may vary from one year to another.
- The recent decrease in staffing and the reduction in resources allocated by DES/NCSE for pupils with SEN have impacted on the school.
- When decisions are being made about the provision of supplementary teaching and the level of support given to individual pupils, consideration must be given to the availability of resources. When supports structures (e.g. time, materials, staffing, etc.) are limited, allocations will be made in as fair and equitable a manner as possible.

### **Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

St Louise de Marillac Primary School hopes to serve all the children in our community without prejudice including children with special educational needs. These children enrich our whole school community.

We, in St. Louise's School, have as our overall aim that every child would leave our school confident and competent in speaking, reading and writing, and with appropriate skills and attainments in numeracy. We strive to enable pupils to be the best that they can possibly be.

In line with our mission statement, the provision of learning support by Special Educational Needs teachers for English, Maths and behaviour, help to develop positive self esteem so that each child is enabled to participate in the full curriculum with the help of their class teacher and in collaboration with their parents/guardians.

## Aims

In terms of learning support for pupils, effective programmes are based on the following:

Principles (LS Guidelines Page 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• effective whole school policies and parental involvement</li><li>• prevention of failure</li><li>• provision of intensive early intervention</li><li>• direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.</li></ul>
Aims (LS Guidelines Page 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to optimise the teaching and learning process</li><li>• implementation of whole-school policies and approaches that target the learning needs of the lowest-achieving pupils.</li></ul>
Subsidiary Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level</li><li>• to develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning</li><li>• to enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners</li><li>• to provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for these pupils</li><li>• to involve parents</li><li>• to promote collaboration among teachers</li><li>• to establish early intervention programmes to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.</li></ul>

By introducing this policy, the school hopes to achieve the following:

1. To enable all pupils to monitor their own learning and so become independent learners within their own ability range.
2. To outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
3. To set out procedures for the enrolment of children with special educational needs in our school.
4. To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
5. To enable pupils with disabilities to avail of and benefit from appropriate education.
6. To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs
7. To establish communication structures for all the partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs (ref. Learning Support Guidelines).

## Board of Management

The Board of Management fulfils its statutory duties towards pupils with Special Educational Needs by engaging with the planning process for the SEN policy and by ratifying and overseeing the implementation of SEN policy.

## Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provisions, working closely with the teacher assigned as the SEN co-coordinator, liaising with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser), securing training for staff and reporting to the Board. The principal's role includes co-ordinating the efforts of all teachers as individuals and as members of a team in the prevention of learning difficulties. He/she works to raise overall levels of achievement across the curriculum, provides extra supports for low-achieving and for gifted pupils where resources allow, and encourages parental involvement. The principal oversees initiatives designed to improve learning opportunities for all the pupils in general, and for pupils with special educational needs in particular.

## **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator**

An Assistant Principal currently has the responsibility of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator in our school. The co-ordinator is responsible for:

- provision, distribution and collection of standardised tests administered in classrooms
- compilation of test results
- maintenance of lists of children requiring and receiving supplementary teaching
- compilation of lists of children requiring and receiving psychological, psychiatric or other therapeutic assessments or interventions
- co-ordination of case-loads of teachers on the Special Education Team (SET)
- ensuring that children get their entitlements in terms of low-incidence hours
- liaising with parents/guardians, Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) teacher and with outside agencies as necessary
- provision of suitable resources required by the SET
- co-ordination of the formulation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Pupil Learning Programmes (IPLPs) for pupils where appropriate
- co-operation with the Principal in managing the work of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs).

## **Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for all children within his/her care, including those children with Special Educational Needs. He/she has an important role to play through the process of inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into mainstream classes. The class teachers and resource teachers identify, guide and intervene in the pupil's learning. The Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if assigned/available, attends to the pupil's care needs, if necessary. It is the responsibility of class teachers to:

- be alert to the possibility that some pupils may have a general learning disability or specific learning disability or to be gifted
- bring concerns to the attention of the SEN co-ordinator
- modify and differentiate class programmes where relevant by implementing appropriate teaching strategies in consultation with the relevant teachers and professionals
- provide supplementary teaching to pupils experiencing low achievement and extremely high achievement.

It is the responsibility of teachers on the Special Education Team to:

- liaise with class teachers on procedures for monitoring pupils' progress
- discuss with class teachers on matters of the grouping of pupils for instruction
- select learning materials that meet pupils' needs and interests
- ensure that additional resources available in the school are directed at pupils' learning needs
- consult with the HSCL teacher to identify ways in which parents who may have literacy difficulties can be encouraged participate in programmes designed to help their child to learn and to improve their own literacy skills.

## **Special Needs Assistants**

SNAs are assigned to meet children's needs according to DES circulars and SENO recommendations, at the discretion of the principal/SEN co-ordinator. The SENO assigns the SNA to the school to meet the needs of particular pupil/pupils each school year. This assignment is received on a yearly basis.

The role of the SNA is:

- to support the child in areas appropriate to the child's needs
- to attend IEP meetings and other meetings that may occur with outside agencies if appropriate
- to work and collaborate with the class teacher, recognising that the class teacher has overall responsibility for the child
- to fulfil other duties assigned to them by the B.O.M., Principal or Special Needs Co-ordinator of the school and as set out in DES circulars.

### **Parents/ Guardians**

Parents agree to allow their child undergo assessment(s), monitor homework, attend meetings regarding the child and to help implement IPLPs and IEPs, where applicable. Parents generally play a positive role in the implementation of the plan.

Our policy is set out as follows:

- 1.0 Provision for the enrolment of children with identified special educational needs
- 2.0 Provision for children with emerging special educational needs (Continuum of Support, NEPS / The Staged Approach, Circular 02/05)
  - 2.1 Classroom Support / Stage 1:  
Procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of the special educational needs of certain children
  - 2.2 School Support / Stage 2: Referral to Special Educational Needs Teacher
  - 2.3 School Support Plus / Stage 3: Consultation or referral for assessment to outside specialist
- 3.0 Assessment
- 4.0 Drafting and Implementing an Education Plan
- 5.0 Inclusion
- 6.0 Deployment of staff
- 7.0 Collaboration and communication
- 8.0 Resources
- 9.0 Transfer to post primary school or to another primary school
- 10.0 Record Keeping
- 11.0 Other related policies e.g. *Code of behaviour, Anti-bullying, Assessment*
- 12.0 Appendices

### **1.0 Provision for the enrolment of children with identified special educational needs (Refer to enrolment policy)**

The Board of Management decides on the enrolment of a pupil with special educational needs in accordance with the EPSEN Act i.e.

"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 degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so who be inconsistent with

- (a) the best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this act.
- (b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated.”

The school gathers information on a child with special educational needs who wishes to enrol in the school by:

- ♦ asking parents/guardians to identify needs in the standard application form
- ♦ meeting between parents/ principal/ class teacher if appropriate
- ♦ requesting copies of reports, assessments, etc.
  - contacting the SENO, NEPS psychologist or other psychologist/speech therapist, or other relevant agency.

The school seeks to establish the child’s educational achievements and needs and other requirements and considers the school’s capacity to meet them.

The final decision on whether a pupil with special enrolment needs is enrolled in the school lies with the Board of Management. This decision is made in keeping with the school’s enrolment policy. Refer to St Louise’s school’s Admissions and Participation Policy.

The relevant section is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

If the child is accepted for enrolment, the Principal applies to the SENO (NCSE) for extra resource hours for children with low-incidence disabilities and/or SNA and/or assistive technology if necessary.

The Principal outlines verbally to parents the manner in which the school can support the learning of the child and how the parents can support the child and the school from the time of enrolment. He/she will ask for parental co-operation in applying for assessment/resources if necessary.

If there are health and safety issues arising from the enrolment of a child with special needs, e.g. access, toilets, supervision, administration of medicine, etc. these will be addressed in a timely fashion.

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## **2.0 Provision for children with emerging special educational needs**

**The Staged Approach** (See *Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers Appendix 2A, NEPS, 2007 and Circular 02/05 Appendix 2B*)

Access to the school’s broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher.

If further intervention is necessary, the class teacher will liaise with the Learning Support/ Resource Teacher (LS/RT) and provide interventions that are additional to and different from those provided under the normal school curriculum.

The school makes every effort to ensure a balance between withdrawal and in-class support where appropriate.

### **2.1 Classroom Support / Stage 1:**

**Procedures for the early identification, screening and addressing of the SEN of certain children**

***Procedures for prevention of learning difficulties***

*(Reference page 44 Learning Support Guidelines).*

The following procedures are implemented throughout the school as a means of responding effectively to pupil's individual needs and ensuring that there is progression and continuity from class level to class level.

- ♦ teachers work from the Whole-School Plan
- ♦ teachers from each class level may/ generally meet once a month and plan their work
- ♦ teachers use of a wide variety of approaches and methodologies to enhance learning in the areas of literacy, maths and social behaviours
- ♦ teachers use various methods to differentiate the curriculum for children
- ♦ a variety of resource materials and concrete materials are available to support learning in all curricular areas
- ♦ multisensory learning is employed
- ♦ principles and techniques from Incredible Years Behaviour Management Programme are common practice in many classes
- ♦ the school promotes e-learning and use of digital media. Digital content, software programmes and apps are a good source of materials for teaching and learning.
- ♦ all classes have opportunities to use IWBs, laptops and ipads
- ♦ all classes employ various assessment strategies including self- evaluation strategies and techniques to assess learning
- ♦ teachers and pupils are supported through the School Completion Programme and through after school activities and clubs where resources allow
- ♦ the provision of additional support in the following areas -
  - language acquisition and development
  - literacy
  - numeracy
  - behaviour management
  - social skills
- ♦ the practice of correct letter formation is adhered to consistently throughout the school.
  - ♦ cursive handwriting is introduced and practiced in 3rd class
  - ♦ emphasis is placed on the recall of tables facts, on mental maths and on problem solving strategies.

### **Parental Involvement**

The involvement of parents is vital in their child's learning. We implement a whole-school parental involvement programme that encourages the development of children's oral language skills and the sharing books of books with children. Activities include:

- ♦ information meetings for parents focusing on how they can help their child's learning
- ♦ parents may be asked to sign homework
- ♦ use of Early Start, HSCL, class, parent lending libraries
- ♦ encouragement to use the local public libraries
- ♦ regular communication and updates about whole school events relating to literacy and numeracy activities e.g. posters, newsletter, school blog, notes home.

### **Initiatives, resources and programmes**

- ♦ Aistear programme is implemented in infant classes
- ♦ Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery programmes are implemented
- ♦ Initiatives that promote reading are used such as Peer Tutoring, Daily 5, One-to-One Reading, Storytime, Silent Reading periods, Drop Everything And Read, Readathon, Read at Home Time (this generally happens in Infant classes once a week)

- ♦ Local, national and International initiatives e.g. One Book, One Ballyfermot; World Book Day
- ♦ Adult literacy and parenting classes when the opportunity arises
- ♦ We implement paired reading programmes involving staff and children in the school
- ♦ Staff members and/or volunteers may participate in reading activities in classes
- ♦ HSCL teacher may offer sessions on paired/shared reading to parents
- ♦ 'Buddy' Reading programmes may be organised between different class levels
- ♦ A variety of literacy material is available such as Big Books, lift-the-flapbooks, SRA Kits, Folens Boxes, Multiple Choice Comprehension Boxes, sets of school dictionaries and bibles
- ♦ Class Libraries in every classroom and library visits to local library.
- ♦ Well-stocked school Reference Library
- ♦ Print rich environment is provided in classrooms and throughout the school.
- ♦ The use of class novels is an integral part of the English programme
- ♦ Shared Book/ Big Book activities are used
- ♦ Whole school policy on language development. Teachers may choose elements from the following programmes:
  - ♦ Thinking Skills Programme
  - ♦ Chatterbox Oral Language Cards
  - ♦ Wonderland programme
  - ♦ Magic Emerald Language programme
  - ♦ 20 Steps towards Language Development. This is a thematic approach.
  - ♦ First Steps Speaking and Listening Teacher Resource.
  - ♦ Other specific speaking and listening activities
- ♦ There is a whole school policy on the teaching of phonological and phonemic awareness up to 2nd class. (Currently, *Fonics Phirst* Programme is used and we intend to pilot *Jolly Phonics* in selected classrooms in the coming year(s)).
- ♦ The P.A.T. Programme, Sound Linkage and Newell Literacy Programme are also available in LS rooms.
- ♦ Provision of supplementary resources and materials such as maths games, maths materials, teacher resources, software, phonic games, big books, library resources, supplementary reading schemes. Materials are stored carefully for ease of use and replacement.
- ♦ The provision of paired reading/ phonic programmes by adults to pupils who need it most.
- ♦ Editing symbols may be used throughout the school for evaluating and correcting pupil's written work.

## **2.2 School Support / Stage 2: Referral to Special Educational Needs Teacher**

*(DES Learning Support Guidelines p. 57 and Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007)*

If the strategy of differentiated support in class does not produce the required outcomes, the class teacher will discuss with the child's parents that their child's needs might be better served in a small group with a learning support teacher either in-class or on a withdrawal basis for a part of the instruction time each week.

The "triggers" for further intervention, if resources allow, will include:

- the child makes little progress even when teaching approaches are directed at identified areas of weakness
- the child is slow to develop literacy and numeracy skills
- the child has social difficulties (communication, relationships etc.)
- the child has emotional/behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behavioural management techniques

- the child has physical difficulties
- a request from the class teacher for extra support for any reason.

A child's need for supplementary teaching is determined by:

- Results of standardised testing
- Teacher recommendation
- Parents' concerns
- Availability of resources

Following evaluation of the results of the formal standardised screening tests, the SEN team and the principal in consultation with the class teachers will decide what children will be allocated learning support. When support structures (e.g. time, materials, staffing etc.) are limited, allocations will be made in as fair and equitable a manner as possible,

Selection of pupils for learning support classes and supplementary teaching is generally based on the lowest-achieving pupils and also on the recommendation of the class teacher based on testing and screening results.

This process of selection involves the class teachers, SET team, SEN co-ordinator and the Principal.

Other factors affecting selection are:

- case-load of Learning Support and Resource teachers
- maximum group size
- need for continuation/discontinuation (13-20 weeks)
- child's attendance at school

### **Whole school procedures and criteria for identifying and selecting pupils for Supplementary Teaching**

- Each child from Senior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> who is enrolled in the school is tested annually using standardized screening tests.  
At present we are using MIST, NRIT, Micra T and Sigma T tests.
- Standardised tests will be administered and corrected by the class teacher or Learning Support Teacher.
- There is consultation between teachers, parents and SEN teachers. Support services are allocated to pupils as appropriate. Depending on the availability of staff and resources, the school will make every effort to accommodate the learning needs of each pupil.
- Following the standardised tests, pupils who are scoring at or under the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile are given priority for places in Learning Support/ Supplementary Teaching.
- If a child is considered for supplementary teaching, further diagnostic testing may be undertaken by a member of SEN team.
- Parents/guardians who indicate that they have any concerns regarding Diagnostic Testing are invited to come and discuss the issues with the Class and/or LS Teacher.
- In the event that permission for diagnostic testing is refused, a written record of the decision with parent's /guardian's signature is kept in the pupil's profile folder.
- In the event that permission for pupil to attend Learning Support is refused, a written record of the decision with parent's /guardian's signature and the results of Diagnostic Testing is kept in the pupil's profile folder.

- Standardised Diagnostic Tests are administered and analysed by the Class / Learning Support/ Resource Teacher. At present we may administer any of a range of tests such as MIST, Norman France (Maths), Neale Analysis (English), Ballard and Westwood Tables Test, standardised Spelling Test, Dolch List recognition and British Reading Scales
- The SEN Teacher will communicate the results of Diagnostic Tests to the Class Teacher and together they will consider the outcomes of the assessment.
- The SEN Teacher will draw up an IPLP (or IEP) in consultation with class teacher and follow up progress to ensure that learning targets are clearly identified and to assess progress of pupil.
- The Class teacher/LS teacher will consult with parents/guardians and discuss the IPLP and note the supports they can offer the programme.
- Any changes made to learning support arrangements are documented and filed with pupils IPLP / IEP file.

### **The focus of intervention strategies**

- The Support Teacher will implement a learning plan for the child either as part of a small group, as part of the whole class or on an individual basis for a specific time frame (instructional term of 13/20 weeks)
- Small group/individual instruction
- Intensive tuition, daily if possible
- Strong focus on oral language development, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and development of comprehension skills
- Engage pupils in frequent supervised oral/silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension of these texts
- Tuition focusing on development of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Focus on language development in mathematics
- Development of mathematical procedures and concepts.

Among the models used on our school are:

- a) in-class support with teacher/SNA/LS/RT
- b) group teaching of topics such as Oral Language/Literacy/ Maths/Behaviour/Social Skills
- c) individual/group work with Resource Teacher/ Reading/ Maths Recovery teacher.

### **Whole School Procedures for Continuing/ Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching of a Pupil**

- At the end of each instructional period, i.e. September to mid-February and mid-February to end of June, and following consultation between Learning Support Teacher and Class Teacher and parents, a decision is made about the level of support needed thereafter.
- The criteria on which this decision is based include such concerns as:
  - has the pupil achieved some/ all learning targets set?
  - will the pupil be able to cope independently in the classroom context?
  - how well the pupil's efforts will continue to be supported once regular Learning Support Structure has been discontinued? Is there strong home/ after school support structure in place for the pupil?
  - Consultation with the class teacher
  - Teacher observation- Learning Support & Class Teacher
  - Overall Learning Support demands in the school
- The decision will also be based on the outcomes of teacher observation and teacher designed tasks and tests.

- The decision to discontinue Learning Support will take into account the resources available in the school at a particular time. This decision will be consultative involving Learning Support Teacher, Class Teacher and parent/guardian. A decision to discontinue Learning Support during the year is relayed to parents/guardians. There is a standard school letter available for this purpose should teachers wish to use it. **Appendix 5A** – Discontinuation of Learning Support – English; **Appendix 5B** – Discontinuation of Learning Support - Maths
- A decision to discontinue Learning Support at the end of the year is recorded in pupils' report card.
- A decision to continue the provision of Learning Support will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP.

## **2.3 School Support Plus /Stage 3: Consultation or referral for assessment to outside specialist**

*(See Special Educational Needs A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007 and SESS website)*

**See Appendix 2A, 2B**

### **Criteria being used to move a pupil to Stage 3**

- If the Class Teacher and/or Learning Support Teacher are of the opinion that the child is still not making appropriate progress with his/her learning and/or social skills and/or behaviour, despite interventions, and that the child may need more intensive support, the SEN team will meet. Depending on the outcome of this meeting, in consultation with parents, specialist personnel / agencies from outside the school may be requested to become involved. The principal or SEN Coordinator will liaise with the relevant outside agencies, e.g. NEPS, SENO, HSE, paediatrician, speech and language therapist, audiologist, occupational therapist.
- Where it is thought that a pupil may need the support of an SNA, informal testing, consultation, observation and recording will be initiated by the class teacher well in advance of the application deadline for SEN resources. The child will then, with the consent of parents/guardians, be referred to the appropriate professional/outside agency for an assessment. This will ensure that if extra resources are granted to the child the school will be in a position to provide these resources as early as possible.
- If a child's under-achievement in **learning** is still giving cause for concern, and the child has attended at least two terms of supplementary teaching, he/she may undergo diagnostic testing with a member of SET (Refer to Assessment section below and school's Assessment policy). If a child is identified as still struggling e.g. below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised tests, the school may refer the child for a Psychological Assessment with NEPS, having consulted with parents through the Principal. In cases of referral to NEPS, as the school has an entitlement to only a limited number of assessments annually, the class teacher, SEN team and the principal and parents will prioritise those children with the greatest need for further assessment.
- The assessments of the children take place in a suitable quiet location if it is to take place in school.
- Class teachers, resource teachers, parents and SNAs may meet the NEPS psychologist before and after a child's assessment in order for all concerned to be better informed.

- Generally speaking, the assessment report will indicate if the child has a special educational need, and the Psychologist/professional will determine whether the child's need is categorized as Low or High Incidence. Low incidence disabilities will be allocated resource hours by the SENO and High Incidence disabilities will be catered for under the school's General Allocation System. The Psychologist/professional may also recommend access to a Special Needs Assistant and the SENO will adjudicate on this issue.
- Following assessments and the advice of the psychologist and/or other professionals, the child receives extra support if deemed necessary, e.g. therapeutic intervention, resource hours allocation, access to an SNA, as recommended by the professionals and approved by the SENO, with the consent of the parents.
- The SEN co-ordinator/Principal will organise the paperwork for exemptions from Irish from the DES if recommended by the psychologist and requested by parents.

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### 3.0 Assessment

- ♦ Ongoing structured observation and assessment of pupils' progress in maths and English.
- ♦ Pupils may also be referred to Stage 2 at any time throughout the year should parents / guardians or teacher have concerns.
- ♦ Spelling tests and Ballard & Westwood Timed Arithmetic tests are carried out in 1st-6<sup>th</sup> classes. The resulting data is analysed and the information gathered serves different purposes :
  - ♦ assesses individual pupils progress/ weaknesses.
  - ♦ serves as a means of responding to pupils individual needs.
  - ♦ provides information for school self-evaluation process and future planning
- Teachers identify concerns through observations. A standard checklist for teachers to document concerns is available should teachers wish to use it. **Appendix 4.**
- Concerns may be raised at parent teacher meetings, informal notes home, and through the home-school liaison teacher
- Supplementary teaching will be provided to the target pupils within a specific timeframe such as an instructional term of 20 weeks.
- It will involve small group teaching or one to one teaching if small group teaching is not effective.
- The school favours the upskilling of SNAs to assist children where appropriate.
- There is provision made for appropriate ongoing support in the classroom for pupils for whom supplementary teaching has been discontinued/reduced, e.g. spelling programmes, maths groups, buddy reading.
- Speech and language assessment/therapy if required is through referral to HSE
- We have ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language and literacy of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties. (See Assessment policy for more detail).  
Strategies include the use of:
  - ♦ teacher observation
  - ♦ structured synthetic phonics programme
  - ♦ teacher-designed checklists
  - ♦ staff monitor reading, check comprehension and supervise activities on an individual basis and reward progress.
- In the third term, when standardised tests are corrected, the class teacher in conjunction with a member of SET team will draw up a list of potential pupils for further

diagnostic testing to be carried out before the end of the school year or before the end of Term 1 of the following year.

If concerns seem to warrant the provision of support of stage 3, further assessment is carried out by an educational psychologist or other professional, after which recommendations are discussed in consultation with class teacher, learning support teacher, principal and parents.

### **A) Informal Testing**

Informal testing is ongoing both by learning support teacher and class teacher. The school's Assessment policy outlines in detail and the outline below is for information purposes for the SEN policy.

At present the following types of assessment are used in this school.

- Teacher observation. Class teachers may exchange classes for the purpose of objective observation
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Work samples, projects and portfolios. Pupils self-evaluation folders are passed on to next class teacher
- Regular reference to and observance of Class and Homework copies
- Children's recorded work/picture. (Some samples of children's work are kept in a folder in each class and passed on to the next class teacher).

- Observing child's language development

Receptiveness to language- pupils ability to listen, speak and express verbally

- ◆ ability to interpret and respond to non-verbal cues
- ◆ ability to following directions
- ◆ understanding ideas and concepts
- ◆ understanding the different ways language is used.

Competence and confidence in using language

- ◆ present ideas
- ◆ talk about experiences
- ◆ give and take turns
- ◆ initiate and conclude conversations
- ◆ perform social functions using language
- ◆ comprehend.

Developing cognitive abilities through language

- ◆ focus on detail, be explicit about it, elaborate, qualify, modify and explain ideas
- ◆ discuss solutions to problems
- ◆ ask questions.

Emotional and imaginative development through language

- ◆ ability to express feelings
- ◆ reactions
- ◆ response to fiction and poetry.

Individual attributes

- ◆ behaviour
- ◆ concentration
- ◆ application & motivation
- ◆ attendance
- ◆ health & fitness.

### **B) Class Screening/Standardised Testing**

- The Micra-T and Sigma-T will be administered to pupils in 1st class - 6th class at the end of May/ early June each year. The results will be recorded on the Aladdin school management system. These results will serve to inform both the Class Teacher and SET Team and will enable them to plan their work for the beginning of new school year.
- Pupils who join the school during the year will be tested as soon as possible by a member of the SET team. The principal will seek pupil's test results from the previous school.
- Each teacher will have access to standardised test results.
- Class Teachers will administer and correct Spelling Test and Ballard and Westwood Tables Test. These result sheets will follow the class up the school as the group moves from one teacher to another. It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that they are kept in a secure place.
- Previously, the SEN Co-ordinator ensured that Class Profile were returned at the end of the year and transferred to new teacher at the beginning of next school year. Since the introduction of Aladdin, the information is available on-line on a secure system.

### **C) Diagnostic Testing**

Diagnostic tests may be administered to pupils by SEN teacher before extra support tuition commences. Diagnostic tests include Neale Analysis, DRA, Rain Test (Eng. Reading), Norman France (Maths).

## **Exceptional Ability/Giftedness**

### **Definition and Background/origins**

"An able child is one that achieves or has the ability to achieve at a high level significantly in advance of their peer group. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range." (Eyre, 1999).

Children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence (an I.Q. score of 130+, 98<sup>th</sup> Percentile).

Giftedness is recognised as a "disability" or Special Education condition in the Education Act of 1998.

The school will attempt to cater for those pupils who are exceptionally able or very bright in any curriculum area, resources permitting.

### **PROCEDURE FOR IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF GIFTED PUPILS**

A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able pupils:

- ♦ Standardised tests
- ♦ Curriculum textbook assessments
- ♦ N.R.I.T.
- ♦ Psychological Assessments
- ♦ Teacher observation
- ♦ Peer and Parent appraisal
- ♦ Referral by other individuals or organizations.

### **RESPONSIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT**

The class teacher is responsible for differentiation within the classroom.

The SEN co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- organization of extension classes including timetabling
- acquisition and distribution of teaching resources for differentiation
- acquisition and distribution of information regarding referral and assessment by outside agencies (e.g. D.C.U.)
- liaison with parents and class teachers.

The SEN co-ordinator and class teacher will meet with parents of Exceptionally Able and Talented pupils to pass on information regarding referral, assessment and programmes at CTYI (Centre for Talented Youth in Ireland) at Dublin City University. When necessary, funding may be made available by the school to cover costs incurred by economically disadvantaged pupils selected for attendance at CTYI. According to guidelines for professional development, the B.O.M. may consider compensating teaching staff who attend in-service training and courses outside of school hours about giftedness, subject to funding being available.

## **New Enrolments**

- If a child has enrolled in September and no standardised test results are forthcoming/available from the previous school or parents, a Learning Support teacher will administer a standardised test before the end of October. The outcome of this will determine if further diagnostic tests are required.
- Pupils who join the school during the year and are found to be in need of Learning Support will be catered for as soon as possible

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## **4.0 Drafting and Implementing an Education Plan**

(for pupils at Stage 3 of Circular 02/05)

*See Chapters 2 and 3, Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process, NCSE and Special Educational Needs A Continuum of Support, NEPS, 2007*

### **Purpose of an Individual Educational Plan**

- Provide a continuum of support
- Identify pupil progress at a level commensurate with ability
- Provide structure within school organisation
- Support access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- Ensure records are kept
- To provide communication between home and school.

### **Information included in an IPLP and IEP**

#### **❖ IEP and IPLP Template**

This is an agreed school format. IPLP is used by for pupils attending Learning Support and IEP is used for pupils attending for Resource Hours. Refer to:

**Appendix 6A** IPLP Individual Profile and Learning Support Programme, English

**Appendix 6B** IPLP Individual Profile and Learning Support Programme, Maths

**Appendix 6C** IEP Individual Education Plan for Children with Allocated Resource Hours

An IEP is formulated for children who have been allocated low-incidence resource hours. The plan breaks down the existing levels of attainment of the child with SEN into finely-graded targets. This is a collaborative process between class teachers/resource teachers/

SNA (if applicable)/ Special Needs Co-ordinator/ parents/ principal/SENO and other outside agencies if involved with child.

The plan includes:-

- the nature and degree of the child’s abilities and skills
- the degree and nature of the child’s special educational needs
- the child’s present level of performance
- the services to be provided.

The management of the IEP is the responsibility of the class teacher and resource teachers. A copy of the plan is given to all those involved in the child’s education.

#### ❖ **IEP / IPLP Time Span**

It is intended that the IEP/IPLPs will be constructed and that targets and goals will be identified in the first term. These will be reviewed and up-dated in February/ March.

#### ❖ **IEP Meetings**

- The SEN teacher co-ordinates the planning and construction of an IPLP/IEP
- The personnel involved in the construction of an IPLP/IEP are the following:  
Class Teacher, Resource Teacher, Special Needs Co-ordinator, Parent and Principal (if available), outside agencies (if involved with the child and deemed to be necessary/useful).
- If deemed appropriate, the child will be involved in the latter stages of IPLP / IEP construction.
- All personnel involved in the IPLP / IEP process will receive a copy of the plan.

#### ❖ **Review Process**

- Reviews of learning plans shall be carried out in February/ March annually.
- Class teacher and Resource Teacher will generally be involved in the review process.

#### ❖ **Involvement of the SENO**

- If additional resources are required over and above those normally available in a mainstream school setting, the principal will bring it to the attention of the SENO.
- The principal, SEN coordinator and teacher involved with the child are responsible for ongoing consultations with psychologists, SENO and others.

#### ❖ **Transfer of IEPs**

Necessary IEPs and files in relation to pupils are passed on to the receiving teacher in the event the following year. The SEN teacher will seek the consent of Parents/ Guardian so that copies of relevant documentation from a child’s previous school being obtained. A standard letter is available for this.

#### **Appendix 7 –Transfer of Information from previous school**

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## **5.0 Inclusion**

In St Louise’s, we accept the definition of Special Educational Needs as defined in the Special Educational Needs Act 2004. “A special education need refers to a person who has a restriction in capacity to participate in and benefit from education due to an enduring physical sensory mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.”

For the purposes of this policy we also include children who are experiencing a learning delay and who require supplementary teaching. We also include exceptionally bright/able pupils, resources permitting.

Pupils with SEN are integrated in mainstream classes for all subjects. Supplementary teaching is given in a variety of ways: in-class with support given to the class teacher; withdrawal in small groups or one-to-one teaching. Some pupils have full or part-time access to a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) sanctioned by the Special Educational Needs Officer (SENO).

- The implementation of the SPHE curriculum supports inclusiveness
- Pupils with SEN are exposed to as broad a curriculum as possible in a mainstream setting, taking their individual abilities into account
- Circle time, art and drama are used as strategies to instil in pupils an awareness of people with specific needs
- Differentiation, group work, classroom organisation and management all contribute to supporting inclusiveness
- Teachers operate differentiation in all subject areas as appropriate, e.g. a section in the physical education school plan outlines how the curriculum will be adapted for individual pupils as required
- The school is wheelchair-friendly.

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## **6.0 Deployment of Staff**

### **Model of Supplementary Teaching implemented by the school**

- Currently the general practice operated is the withdrawal method of learning support. Pupils are taken in small groups (3-5) for five periods per week in a very structured timetabled manner. This system works very well from an administrative point of view.
- At various times throughout the year LST/ RT will arrange in-class support and assist with Literacy/ Maths Initiatives e.g. Peer Tutoring, Station Teaching etc.
- Programmes that require instruction on one-to-one basis are running in the school such as Reading Recovery and Maths Recovery (this does not need to be individual)
- A range of early intervention and preventative strategies for classroom use is used to support the work being done in Learning Support class e.g. spelling checklists, phonological awareness etc.
  
- The Learning Support Teacher generally uses a different scheme of readers to the Class Teacher. Pupils may be given the class reader to so that they will be able to participate in certain areas of English in their own class.
  
- Children in 6<sup>th</sup> Class will attend Learning Support but the service provided may be limited depending on the resources available.
  
- Priority of attention will be given to pupils in lower classes and focus on early intervention will be where there is greater number of children scoring at or under the 12th percentile in standardised tests.

- Children will usually be in Learning Support for two years but, depending on their needs, this may be longer. Children may attend for a third year if they have not made significant improvement or are still at or below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  - There are two instructional terms in the school year for learning support. These are from September to mid-February and from mid-February to June.
  - The principal will have the weekly timetable of the members of the SEN team by the end of September each year.
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## 7.0 Collaboration and Communication

### Liaising with parents

#### a) Parental Involvement in School Learning Support Policy

- Parental involvement will mainly be promoted through their attendance at meetings. A group meeting may be held in September and individual parent-teaching meetings are usually held in November.
- Parents generally are asked to come to meet with the Principal or Class Teacher regarding their child's needs and the provision of Learning Support.
- Parents are asked to sign consent when completing the school's enrolment form. This consent is necessary for the purpose of withdrawal for one-to-one or small group tuition or for administration of diagnostic tests
  - Parents/ guardians are informed of the work plan for their child and their help is enlisted. Sometimes parents/ guardians do not attend meetings when invited, but open lines of communication are maintained and parents/guardians are assured that they are welcome to come and discuss their child's Learning Support.

#### b) Communication with Parent:

- Much knowledge in relation to the child's progress is imparted incidentally. The results of standardised tests are communicated to parents in writing each June in school reports. These may be given again by the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher at formal Parent Teacher Meetings in November or at arranged meetings throughout the school year. It may be necessary to explain the scores to parents/guardians. **Appendix 7A & 7B** are available to assist understanding scores. This may also be included with the annual school report
- Parents are invited to IEP and IEP review meetings
  - Parents are requested to ensure homework is completed by signing their child's work. If possible, they are asked to quiz the children's knowledge of tables, check spellings, listen to and read with the children and encourage reading for enjoyment.
- In the event of parent/ guardian who does not wish their child to avail of the Learning Support the school offers they will be requested to indicate their refusal in writing to the B.O.M. There is a standard school letter available for this purpose. **Appendix 8.**
- Should pupils attending Learning Support be absent from school on a regular basis parents/ guardians are made aware of the poor attendance. A standard letter is available. **Appendix 9**

#### Continuing/ Discontinuing Learning Support

- The class teacher in consultation with LS/RT and principal and parent decide on whether or not to continue with supplementary teaching or to discontinue at the end of each instructional term.
- The criteria used for decision-making in this regard are the progress each individual child is making and the demand on resources at any particular time. There is a standard letter available should a parent/guardian whose child has been attending Learning Support wish to withdraw her child for any reason, contrary to the advice of SEN Team. **Appendix 8**

**Monitoring Progress**

- It is the role of class teachers and/or Parents/Guardians /LST/RT to monitor a child’s progress. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are done and reviewed twice a year for those children who receive low-incidence resource hours. The results of standardised and diagnostic tests play a role in the monitoring of progress.

**Home School Liaison Teacher**

- The HSCL teacher may visit parents/guardians with NEPS or other consent and/or assessment forms.
- The home school liaison teacher is involved in supporting and advising the parents of children with difficulties in school.

**Involvement of Pupils**

- The pupils in need of Learning Support are generally informed through age-appropriate discussion with them about their needs and difficulties and the help that is being offered to them.

**Links with outside agencies**

- Other professionals involved in pupils Learning Support Programme will be contacted by the principal and/or SEN co-ordinator who will then transfer appropriate information to relevant persons in the school. On occasion it may be necessary to arrange communications with outside personnel and the Classroom teacher or Special Needs Assistant. This will be arranged by principal/SEN Coordinator.  
Any relevant information will be recorded in pupil’s IPLP and IEP. Confidential reports are kept in the principal’s office. The class teacher has a copy in her filing cabinet and he/she passes it on to the next teacher or returns it to the office at the end of the school year.

**Outside Agencies**

- The NEPS psychologist may be consulted about a proposed learning or behavioural management plan
- Referrals will be made by the principal to the local clinic/child and family centre in Ballyfermot regarding children with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Communication may be made by the SEN Coordinantor, principal and/or class teacher, HSCL to Speech and Language Therapist, Familiscope, Barnardos, EWO, Ballyfermot Youth Service, BLCO, Cherry Orchard After School Clubs, the Base, and others as necessary.
- Staff from School Completion Programme will liaise with After-schools, Equine Centre, Ballyfermot Youth Services, the Base as appropriate.



## 8.0 Resources

The school has invested in a variety of resources and programmes that are specifically intended for use with SEN pupils. Generally these resources are stored in Learning Support Rooms but some may be stored in Staffroom.

SEN teacher/ Class Teacher will consult with the principal before purchasing any new expensive resources over and above the allotted BOM discretionary spending annually.

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## 9.0 Transfer to post-primary

- Teachers and students from post primary school may visit 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in Term 1 to begin the transition process.
- 6<sup>th</sup> class students and parents are invited to an open day in post primary schools to facilitate the transition process.
- In term 3, as preparation for confirmation, 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils may be partnered with transition year students for the Faith Friends programme. This also acts as a buddy system when they start post primary.
- An activity based transition week may be run at the end of June in the post primary school. In Caritas College, our partner post-primary, this programme is facilitated by SCP
- School Completion Programme staff work with Caritas College and help with transition of targeted pupils in particular through the Mentoring for Achievement (MAP) programme.
- The NCCA 6<sup>th</sup> class report is sent to any post-primary school that requests it after the student has been enrolled.
- The SENO may observe any pupils that are currently receiving SNA access in school to determine whether this support should continue in post primary.
- A copy of psychological assessments are transferred to post-primary if requested with parental consent.

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## 10.0 Record Keeping

**Refer to guidance in relation to record keeping in Learning Support Guidelines.**

It has been agreed that the following records will be kept.

- The results of the standardised screening tests Sigma T, Micra T and NNRIT are kept in electronic format on the Aladdin management system. The Principal, Class Teacher and SEN Teacher will have a copy of these. The booklets are kept for the following school year and then shredded. A master copy of the results are kept and the results for each child for Micra T, Sigma T are listed in each child's Report Book.
- A master copy of Ballard & Westwood Table Test is also kept. The test sheets are shredded when test is completed. Individual pupil record sheet for Ballard and Westwood Tables Test is filled in and passed on in pupil folder at the end of the year.
- Annual school reports. These are stored electronically.
- Long Term Plan of Work. This is kept by SEN Teacher.
- Diagnostic test results. These are kept by SEN Teacher.
- IPLP / IEP – This will include results of Assessment Tests at end of term, standardised test sheets.

An IEP is kept for each child in Special Class or those in receipt of Resource Time. IPLP is kept for each child in receipt of Learning Support.

- A copy of IEP/IPLP is given to Class Teacher. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to pass the document on to next teacher and when the child leaves the school it is important that it is shredded when it is no longer relevant.
- These records will be kept until the child is 21 years of age.

### **Access to records**

- It has been agreed that the Class teacher, learning support teacher/ resource teacher, Principal, school psychologist, parents/ guardians, primary/secondary school which the child is enrolling in will have access to these records.
- Access is with principal's/ parental permission.

### **Storage of Records**

- Records are stored in Principals/Secretary's Office/Archive storage area and in learning support room until pupil is 21 years of age.
- Principal/Learning Support teachers/ Resource Teachers / Secretary are responsible for filing these records.

### **Roles and responsibilities for Record Keeping**

#### ***Class Teacher***

- Class teacher will carry out behaviour checklists where appropriate.
- Class teacher will ensure that Record of Standard Test Results is available for transfer from one class teacher to the next at the end of the year (may not be necessary with Aladdin, will keep under review).
- Will be responsible for safe storage of record sheets during the year.
- Will ensure that test results are recorded in Report books
- Will be responsible for Long -Term Plan, Cúntas Míosúil, Fortnightly Plan. The Class Teacher will ensure that differentiation is in place to accommodate SEN pupils in whole class situations.

#### ***Learning Support Teacher/Resource Teacher***

- L.S.T./ R.T. will assist in administering and correcting of standardised tests of children in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes if requested by the class teacher or principal
- L.S.T./R.T. will administer diagnostic testing to children who are below the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile to determine their specific needs.
- Responsible for Attendance record, Long term plan, Termly/Monthly plan, Weekly plan, Daily Plan, Results of screening tests and diagnostic tests, IPLP.
- Responsible for shredding old test papers when no longer needed (must be kept for one year)
- Responsible for IEP, Long term plans, Progress records, Literacy tests.

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## **11.0 Other related policies**

### **Timetabling and Organisation**

Timetabling for resource and learning support is done through a collaborative approach between LS/RT class teachers, principal and SEN co-ordinator. Due recognition is taken of the specific needs of each child. Team Teaching is at the discretion of individual teachers or at the request of the principal for specific children and/or programmes.

### **Homework**

Generally, the children may get homework from both the class teacher and the learning support teacher. This will continue unless a special request is made by the parents. Where there is an issue regarding homework teachers will try to find a solution.

### **Exemption from Irish**

Learning support children are not exempt from Irish. This has implications for Class timetabling and class teacher must ensure that child does not miss out on subjects on a continuous basis. An effort is made that a variety of subjects will be carried out during the learning support time. Certain children (that is children who have been assessed by the psychologist and a recommendation has been made) are exempt from Irish.

### **Code of Behaviour**

Children with ADD and ADHD and other diagnosed behavioural problems are given some flexibility as regards behaviour issues within the school.

### **Out of School Trips**

School trips are a regular feature of Special Educational Needs provision. Permission forms in relation to the proposed trips and for seeking medical assistance in the event of an accident are sought from parents on enrolment to the school. As far as possible, children with SEN are included in class outings. Depending on the nature of the outing the discretion of the class/resource teacher may apply. A number of contactable mobile phone numbers are held by staff. SNAs are issued with clear instructions as to their duties.

The school supports the upskilling of SNAs to work with these and other children.

## **Success Criteria**

The following are some practical indicators of the success of the policy:

- Inclusion of pupils with special needs into our school
- Evidence of adequate progress of pupils with special needs e.g. results of assessments
- Consultation with SENO
- Feedback from teaching staff, special needs assistant, pupils, psychologists
- Positive feedback from parents especially at Parent Teacher Meetings and IEP Meetings
- Happy, well-adjusted children
- Review and evaluation of IEPs
- Positive inclusion practices
- Good outcomes of teacher observation

## **Roles and Responsibility**

## See Appendix 9 Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the policy are:

- ❖ Parents, SENO, Psychologist, Principal, Teaching staff
- ❖ Pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in their own independent learning.

### Monitoring

The school will evaluate the effectiveness of Special Educational Needs provision through monitoring standards reached, reviewing case samples from children, feedback of parents, staff feedback and ongoing monitoring of levels of intervention.

### Review Date

St. Louise's has an ongoing cycle of review of policies. In line with this, the policy will be revisited in 2016 and reviewed. It may be reviewed and amended earlier than this in accordance with relevant new DES circulars and publications.

The Board of Management reserves the right to add to or amend this policy from time to time as deemed necessary.

All parents and in particular parents of children with special educational needs will be made aware of the policy. It will be uploaded to the school blog and a hard copy will be available in the school office.

This policy was ratified at a meeting of the Board of Management.

**Signed:**                      *Dr. Claire McKiernan*            
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

**Date:**                      **5/6/2013**

