

**Policy Statement for Special Education Teaching**  
**St. Marys N.S., Knockbridge**

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**Appendix 1- Supporting Pupils Negatively Impacted by Covid 19 through CLASS**

## **1. Mission Statement/Introduction**

All children, including children with special educational needs, have a right to an education which is appropriate to their needs. In St. Mary's N.S. we understand that children with special needs are children first and have much in common with other children of the same age. Each child has individual strengths, personality and experiences. We recognise that a child's special educational need should not define the whole child. St. Mary's N.S. is an inclusive environment which embraces and celebrates the uniqueness of every child. We are aware that when inclusive education is implemented appropriately, benefit can accrue to all students in the classroom. Our school strives to provide a broad and differentiated curriculum for all children.

The EPSEN Act (2004) states that special educational needs may arise from four different areas of disability

- Physical
- Sensory
- Mental health
- Learning disability

or from any other condition that results in the child learning differently from a child without that condition.

## **2. Aims of Learning Special Education Policy**

The overall aim of this policy is to build the school's capacity to develop appropriate and effective interventions to meet identified needs as soon as possible so that St. Mary's N.S can support pupils with a range of barriers to learning. This policy aims

- To identify all children who need special consideration as early as possible
- To support their physical/social/emotional and intellectual development
- To ensure these children are given appropriate support to enable full access to the curriculum
- To ensure that these children are fully integrated into all activities of the school
- To involve parents in developing a partnership of support, so they have full confidence in the strategies adopted
- To ensure all pupils foster a sense of self-worth, self-confidence and self-awareness, enabling each child to maximise his/her potential
- To promote co-operation among teachers, special needs assistants and Special Education team in the implementation of this policy
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to differentiate in the classroom for pupils with special educational needs
- To be part of an effective multi-agency network in order to combine services around the needs of the children.
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difference in learning

## **3. Guiding Principles**

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Quality of teaching
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.
- Implementation of staged approach to support provision at class support, school support and school support plus.
- Provision of the model of intervention appropriate for the pupil and the difficulty they are experiencing:
  - Withdrawal model
  - Small group interventions
  - In-class support model
- Parental involvement

- Collaboration between teachers
- Maintenance of support plans by class teachers and special education teachers (SET) at Class Support, School Support and School Support Plus.
- Thorough assessment procedures
- Regular contact with SET pupils
- Manageable caseloads/timetables
- Prevention of failure
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Support from outside agencies
- Continuing professional development (CPD)

#### 4. **Roles and Responsibilities in Special Education**

##### *a) The Board of Management*

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the Special Education Policy
- To ensure that teachers are aware of the importance of identifying children who have special educational needs
- To make every effort to ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided to address learning needs
- To provide a secure facility for storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of special education services
- To ensure that staff adhere to their roles outlined below
- Provide adequate funds for SET materials.

##### *b) The Principal*

- The development and implementation of the school's Special Education Policy in conjunction with the Deputy-Principal.
- Applying the relevant procedures, as laid down by the DES, in providing for pupils with SET
- Liaising with the NCSE and NEPS in order to receive relevant support
- In conjunction with the Deputy-Principal, co-ordinate the caseload and work schedule of the special education teachers.
- Co-ordinate and organise SNA deployment and timetabling in conjunction with the relevant post-holders.
- Being the initial point of contact for parents/guardians with queries or concerns regarding provision of supports for their children
- Co-ordinating applications from parents for exemption from the study of Gaeilge in line with DES circulars
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SET and special needs on an on-going basis.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referral.
- To encourage and facilitate the SET team and all staff members to attend CPD courses.
- To arrange classroom accommodation for special education teachers.
- Arrange for the provision of SET funding and resources.
- Ensure that pupils that have been allocated SET provisions receive it
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessment and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Submit annual standardised test results to the DES via the online portal Esinet.

**c) Deputy Principal/Post Holders:**

**Policy:**

- The development and implementation of the school's Special Education Policy in conjunction with the Principal.
- Collaborating with the principal teacher with regular meetings to discuss issues relating to the development and implementation of the school plan on SET, and to the provision of SET.

**Selection:**

- The implementation of a whole school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement
- Monitoring the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching with the principal, ensuring that support is focused on:  
*“Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support” (2017 Guidelines:pg.19)*
- Identifying the level of support that is needed to meet the pupil's needs, in conjunction with the principal, class teacher and parents.
- Assisting the principal teacher to co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of the special education teachers.

**Assessment:**

- Overseeing the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need.
- Co-ordinating the administration by class teachers of a whole-school screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and/or learning difficulties in literacy and numeracy.
- Consulting with class teachers on the identification of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment, taking into account:
  - the pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure
  - agreed criteria for identifying pupils
  - teachers' own views of the pupils' difficulties and needs
  - special education teachers' caseload.
- Co-ordinating comprehensive diagnostic assessment for each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- Keeping teachers informed about external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals, when requested. Researching current assessments for primary schools.
- Maintaining, collating and tabulating assessment tests
- Ordering standardised assessment scripts each year.
- Distributing standardised assessment scripts to Class Teachers each year.
- Maintaining the results of standardised assessment each year and share the results with the Principal Teacher.
- Advising Class Teachers about baseline and screening assessments in September each year, when requested.

**Support Plans:**

- Devise and update templates for school support plans.
- Advising the Principal Teacher on the construction of Support Plans.
- Advising the Principal on current individualised planning best practice, when requested.
- Advising Class Teachers and Support Teachers about Support Plans, when requested.

#### Co-ordination Activities:

- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching at each stage of support – Classroom Support/School Support/School Support Plus.
- Advising Parents on procedures for availing of special needs services, when requested.
- Advising Class Teachers on procedures for availing of special needs services, when requested.
- Liaising with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Supporting the Principal Teacher to implement a tracking system at whole school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.
- Advising the Principal Teacher about pupils who have been allocated SET provision when requested.
- Completing application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS, CAMHS etc...., in collaboration with Class Teachers and the Principal Teacher, as required.
- Advising on “effective timetabling practices that ensures continuity” (circular 13/17), when requested.
- Advising on Transition, when requested.

#### **d) *Role of the class teacher:***

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. A particular responsibility of the class teacher is to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated. This is best achieved by grouping pupils for instruction, adapting learning materials for higher and lower achieving pupils through differentiation and liaising closely with parents. In addition, fostering a positive social environment in the classroom contributes to both the learning and social goals the teacher has set for the pupils. The class teacher will be guided by the following principles of best practice:

- To recognise and be aware of the needs of each individual child
- To implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils
- To identify children who are experiencing difficulty. The class teacher plays an important role in the initial identification of pupils who are experiencing difficulty
- To meet the needs of all pupils within the class through a differentiated curriculum.
- To implement the school policies on screening and discuss the outcomes with the special education teacher in the context of each pupil’s general performance in class
- To liaise with parents to discuss concerns and to outline the school’s proposed plan of action
- To liaise with the special education teacher in order to devise an effective support plan
- To liaise with the special education teacher in the organisation of timetables, class grouping and available resources so that the pupil receives all possible support to reach his/her targets
- To engage with in-class support from the special education teacher in order to address the learning needs of individual pupils
- Adapt learning materials for lower achieving pupils and higher achieving pupils (through differentiation).

In addition to the guiding principles, the class teacher should be cognisant of the following:

- *Identification of Learning Difficulties:*
  - In supporting the development and implementation of the school SET Policy, the class teacher will administer and score appropriate screening measures, and discuss the outcomes with the special education teachers.
  - The class teacher will liaise closely with parents and elicit relevant information from them regarding e.g. hearing/vision checks
- *Classroom Support/Stage 1:*

- Stage 1 of the staged approach and NEPS classroom support requires teachers to support their pupils learning in the first instance.
- Stage 1 classroom support still continues when school support/school support plus is being phased out (due to the changing needs of the pupils)
- *Support Plans*
  - The staged approach requires class teachers to construct a simple individual plan of support, to implement the plan and review its success regularly, before referring the child for stage 2 interventions. The plan will include level of interventions, targets and progress.
  - Log actions in the support plan
  - For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus, the class teacher will collaborate with the Support Teacher in the development of the support plan by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.
  - For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, the class teacher will adjust the class programme in line with the agreed learning targets and activities in the pupil's Support Plan and maintain a record of the pupil's progress towards achieving those learning targets.
  - A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the support teacher. This consultation will be achieved through formal and informal consultation as the need arises.
- *Communicating with Parents:*
  - For pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching additional time will be devoted to consultation and collaborative planning with these children's parents.
  - In the case of each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low achievement and/or a learning difficulty following administration of an appropriate screening measure, the class teacher should:
    - make parents aware of concerns about their child's progress
    - Outline the support that is available to these pupils.
    - Inform parents that a meeting with the support teacher and/or class teacher will follow assessments.
    - Attend meetings with parents and support teachers.
    - Collaborate with support teachers on the formation of a support plan.
    - Indicate to parents how the pupil's class programme will be modified in order to achieve the agreed learning targets.

**e) *Roles of the Special Education Teacher***

The SET team has the following responsibilities:

- To oversee the whole-school assessment and screening programme
- To monitor the selection of pupils for intervention, ensuring that this service is focused on those with the greatest need as identified by staff and relevant professionals
- Overseeing the day to day operation of the special education policy
- When necessary, in consultation with the Principal, to advise parents/guardians to apply for assessment of their child
- To contact NCSE/NEPS/HSE or other suggested support services to arrange for a pupil's assessment
- To complete relevant correspondence and file securely
- To apply to the NCSE for grants available for provision of assistive technology
- To consult with Deputy-Principal on test results
- To attend in-service training
- To plan ,co-ordinate and record team meetings
- To keep records of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and/or special educational services

- To store copies of all assessments, tests, support plans in a locked filing cabinet in the SET room
- Researching the pupils' learning difficulty, to become au fait with said difficulty.
- Implementing suitable recommendations from outside agencies, wherever possible, and liaise with outside agencies pertinent to the children on their case load.
- Developing a support plan for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching.
- Maintain a forward planner and progress record for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of support.
- Devise targets and maintain records.
- Providing supplementary teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties at School Support/School Support Plus (as per Selection Criteria)
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes, caseload and selection criteria permitting.
- Assisting the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Providing advice to the Class Teacher(if requested) about pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties in such areas as:
  - Individual pupil assessment.
  - Programme planning
  - Curriculum differentiation
  - Approaches to language development
  - Approaches to reading
  - Approaches to spelling
  - Approaches to writing
  - Approaches to Mathematics
  - Behaviour difficulties.
- Meeting with class teachers of each pupil who is in receipt of School Support/School Support Plus, to discuss targets and ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported throughout the school day.
- Meeting with parents of each pupil (sometimes with the class teacher) who is in receipt of support at the end of each instructional term, if possible:
  - To review the pupil's attainment of agreed targets.
  - To discuss the next instructional term
  - To revise the pupil's Support Plan
- Contributing at the school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the special education teacher's room.
- Liaising with external agencies such as speech and language therapists etc.
- In addition to providing supplementary teaching to pupils, the special education teacher is involved in administering a range of formal and informal assessments and in maintaining records of the outcomes of those assessments. The special education teachers shall:
  - Conduct an initial diagnostic assessment of each pupil who has been identified as having low achievement and/or a learning difficulty, based on results of an appropriate screening measure and record the finding of the assessment in the pupil's Support Plan
  - Monitor the ongoing progress of each pupil in receipt of supplementary teaching in relation to the attainment of agreed learning targets and short-term objectives that arise from them, and record the observations in the Forward Planner and Progress Record, or equivalent.
  - Review the progress of each pupil at the end of an instructional term and record it on the pupil's Support Plan
  - Log actions in the Support Plan

- Teaching approaches will 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.
- It is also beneficial for teachers to become involved in local professional networks (within the school itself and with other schools) where good special educational needs practice and disability awareness can be shared and promoted.

**f) *Special Needs Assistant***

In St. Mary's N.S, support staff are seen as crucial members of the team. Their roles are set out in the DES circular 30/2014 and they work under the supervision of the principal, SET and the classroom teacher.

While not exhaustive, their duties include the following:

- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene where a child with special needs cannot independently self-toilet.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation to access the school, the classroom, school transport or avoiding hazards in or around the school.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Administration of medicine where a child requires adult assistance to administer medicine
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school
- Care needs associated with specific medical conditions such as frequent epileptic seizures or for pupils who have fragile health.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential for safety or personal care reasons.
- Assistance with feeding.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties
- Enabling curriculum access for pupils with physical disabilities and/or sensory needs (eg dyspraxia/visual impairment) as well as those pupils with significant and identified social and emotional difficulties.
- Assistance with the use of assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting.
- Assist teachers and/or Principal in maintaining a journal or care monitoring system for pupils including details of attendance and care needs.
- Assist in preparation of school files and materials relating to care and assistance required in class by students with special needs.
- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks
- Presentation of pupils' work, assistance with transition from one lesson activity to another and assistance with cleaning of classroom materials.
- Collaborate with the teaching staff in the delivery of the school's code of behaviour and Stay Safe programmes
- Facilitate the integration of the child with their peer group
- Record observations on assigned pupil
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupils Plans for pupils with Special Educational Needs with particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the pupil concerned and the review of such plans.
- Liaising with the principal, class teachers, special education teachers and attending meetings with parents, SENO, NEPS Psychologists, Túsla.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities such as walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.



**g) *Role of Parents/Guardians***

In St. Mary's N.S the parent's role is valued and parents are seen as partners in education. Our school recognises that parents, through their unique knowledge of their own child, have much to contribute to their child's learning programme. Parents are kept fully informed and are encouraged to take an active part in supporting their child's learning and development at all stages.

Liaising with parents happens in a number of ways in our school, e.g. through parent-teacher meetings, appointments, informal discussions, phone calls. Written communication takes the form of newsletters, school website, Facebook, email, home school copy, homework diaries. Parents of young children may find it difficult to acknowledge that their child has difficulties and staff may have to provide a lot of support for parents to help them come to terms with their child's needs. A sensitive approach is required. Parents/guardians can support the teaching and learning in St. Mary's N.S in the following ways:

- Provide the school with all relevant information, including details about their children's health, early childhood development, milestones and behaviour when enrolling their child.
- Supporting the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:
  - Book sharing/reading stories
  - Storytelling
  - Paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading)
  - Discussion about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills
  - Writing lists and short accounts about children's experiences
  - Counting and measuring and other activities involving number.
  - Visits to the zoo, museum, library etc, to broaden the range of their child's experiences.
  - Using information and communications technology (ICT), where available, to support learning in literacy and/or numeracy.
  - Talking positively about school and school work.
  - Availing of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and mathematics.
  - Modelling involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Participating in their child's efforts to meet their learning targets
- Co-operating with arrangements made with outside professionals and act on recommendations made in professional reports
- Parents should keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home.
- If, following diagnostic assessment, the child has been identified as requiring School Support or School Support Plus, parents should attend a meeting with the Class Teacher or the Special Education Teacher to discuss:
  - The results of the assessment
  - The learning targets
  - The ways in which attainment of the targets can be supported at home
- Where a child has a Support Plan the parents should:
  - Discuss their child's progress with the special education teacher/class teacher.
  - At the discontinuation of School Support the parents will be informed and the child's future progress will be monitored.

**h) *Role of Pupils:***

Where appropriate pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should:

- Outline his/her interests, aspirations, strengths
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.
- Contribute to the Support Plan
- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets.
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught and skills to improve their own learning.

#### **4. Prevention and Early Intervention**

Prevention /Early intervention is a cornerstone of supporting learning.

##### **a) Prevention Strategies**

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include

- Implementation of Aistear to support oral language programmes
- Development of agreed approaches to language development and other aspects of English in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class
- Development of agreed approaches to maths language and methods
- Whole school focus on problem solving
- A systematic and structured phonics programme
- Co-teaching for literacy and maths in infant classes
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties
- Individualised reading in infant classes
- Levelled reading from 2<sup>nd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> class
- Extensive library facilities (in-class & general library)
- Provision of additional support in language development, literacy and maths to those who need it
- Meeting with parents to inform and demonstrate techniques that will help with their child's development
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant Teachers and the special education teachers

##### **b) Early Intervention**

One of the principles of good practice according to the NEPS Continuum of Support model is that children have their needs identified early. St. Mary's N.S has effective strategies for the early identification of special needs and a range of early intervention techniques to address those needs. The initial trigger for action is the child having noticeably more difficulty than his or her peers. Close collaboration between infant teachers and special education teachers, should identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion of children's language, fine and gross motor skills, self-care and attention span will be given due consideration in the selection of pupils for early intervention programmes at Classroom/School Support level.

Some of the factors which teachers can usefully take account of include the following:

- The child's ability to work at a table
- Capacity to work with others
- Persistence despite frustrations
- Ability to listen
- Use of oral language
- Obvious efforts to try to learn to read and write

- Ability to socialise age-appropriately
- Response to structure, organisation, change

Intensive early intervention programmes in the early primary classes can be an effective response to meeting the needs of children with low achievement.

Such programmes will:

- Be set within a specific time frame
- Involve small group teaching or one-to-one teaching where small group teaching has not been effective/difficulties are significant
- Emphasise the development of phonemic awareness
- Develop phonic skills
- Develop word identification skills
- Focus on language development in mathematics

## 5. **Screening of Pupils**

St. Mary's N.S is aware of the importance of vigilant and observant teachers. Teachers are encouraged to trust their own experience to document and monitor any concerns and consult with the special education teachers. As well as teacher observation, screening tools are used for identification of learning difficulties. Screening occurs at regular intervals throughout the school. Our school understands that pupils with 'hidden disabilities' such as milder forms of dyslexia or ADHD are often good at compensating and their difficulties may not become apparent until academic demands exceed their ability to cope. Parental permissions are required for children to receive School Support/School Support Plus and for school based assessments.

### ***a. Screening Tools***

The following screening tools allow us to observe children's learning as they progress through the school.

Junior Infants	York Assessment of Reading & Comprehension (YARC) Early Reading Term 3
Senior Infants	Middle Infant Screening Test
First Class	Micra T Term 1 Sigma T Term 1 NRIT Term 2 Drumcondra Reading & Maths Term 3
Second Class	Drumcondra Reading & Maths Term 3
Third Class	Salford Sentence Reading Term 1 Drumcondra Reading, Maths and Gaeilge Term 3
Fourth Class	NRIT Term 1 Drumcondra Reading, Maths and Gaeilge Term 3
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	Drumcondra Reading, Maths Gaerilge Term 3

The results of the YARC and MIST, combined with teacher observation and station teaching lay the foundation for a continuing process of structured observation.

Results of Drumcondra tests are communicated to parents in the annual school report issued in June. Pupils who score at or below the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> percentile are given priority for further diagnostic assessment and supplementary teaching.

### ***b. Diagnostic Tests***

Diagnostic tests are used to identify underlying difficulties that pupils may have in literacy and maths and motor development. The particular set of diagnostic tests to be administered depends on the pupil's stage of development. Diagnostic assessment generates a more

complete picture of a pupil's needs. St. Mary's N.S uses assessments which contain elements recommended in Learning Support Guidelines (2000), 4.4.2. These include:

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile
- YARC Reading for Comprehension
- Quest Diagnostic Reading test
- Diagnostic Interviews in Number Sense
- Jump Ahead

#### 6. **Selection Criteria (for School Support/School Support Plus)**

Our school selects pupils in accordance with DES Circulars, Guidelines and General good practice *“Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support”* (2017 Guidelines:pg.19)

- Pupils experiencing serious difficulties with oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, application to learning despite interventions made by the class teacher at Classroom Support (Stage1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Pupils who score at or below the 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils scoring at or below STEN 4 (30th percentile) on standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy, who continue to experience difficulties, despite interventions made by the class teacher at Classroom Support (Stage1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Pupils in the infant classes who continue to experience difficulties in early literacy and numeracy skills despite interventions made by the Class Teacher at Classroom Support (Stage 1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.
- Pupils experiencing difficulty with transition to Post-Primary school.
- Gifted pupils, (those scoring above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile in both literacy and numeracy on Standardised Assessments and or have been diagnosed by a NEPS Educational Psychologist as having a superior IQ. Interventions will be made in the first instance by the class teacher at Classroom Support (Stage1) level of the NEPS Continuum of Support.

**In all cases, the class teacher will have opened a Support Plan and recorded interventions in it.**

#### 7. **Allocating Additional Teaching Supports (Continuum of Support)**

In St. Mary's N.S additional teaching support is based on the individual strengths and needs of each pupil. Co-operation and co-ordination between the class teacher and the special education teacher is crucial for the success of this intervention.

In St. Mary's N.S planning and implementation of additional teaching and learning targets are reviewed termly. Pupil progress is assessed against these targets. Decisions are taken as to whether the pupil should receive the same or a reduced level of support teaching, or be discontinued from the programme. When pupils are discontinued, their progress is monitored regularly by the class teacher, special education teacher and parents.

St. Mary's N.S follows the guidelines for additional teaching supports in the Learning Support Guidelines 2000 (5.5, 5.6.,5.7) and Guidelines for Primary Schools, Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools 2017, pgs.8-11.

#### 8. **Record Keeping**

St. Mary's N.S emphasises record keeping in order to monitor a child's academic progress.

The Special Education teacher maintains records of:

- Diagnostic assessment
- The student support plan
- A fortnightly planning and progress record for each pupil or group of pupils in receipt of school support and school support plus is maintained.

- Additional records of pupil progress such as records of oral language, records of oral reading errors, and work samples that can be used to track a pupils progress and learning needs over time

We try to make forms for record keeping as simple as possible so that the main emphasis is on teaching and learning.

#### 9. **Continuing/Discontinuing pupils**

Certain procedures and criteria are applied in deciding whether or not a pupil should continue to receive support from the special education team. The progress of each pupil who is in receipt of such teaching is evaluated and reviewed at the end of each instructional term. This review process focuses on:

- The progress the pupil has made towards the targets set out in the Support Plan
- The effectiveness of the strategies in the Support Plan
- Additional information arising from observation of the pupil during the instructional term
- Parental view on the progress, focusing in particular on the outcomes of learning activities in the pupil's support plan that were implemented at home

If progress is considered to be satisfactory, the support from Special Education Teacher is discontinued or reduced. This decision takes into account the pupil's learning needs, and the needs of other pupils in the school who have low achievement. It also involves the type of ongoing support available to the pupil within his/her own classroom.

If the pupil's progress towards targets is less than expected, the reasons for this are considered. Revised targets and adjustments to the strategies need to be arranged. The pupil will continue to have a Support Plan.

If, after a number of terms of support teaching, it is found that a pupil has made very little progress towards achieving his/her individual targets in his Support Plan, a comprehensive review of the pupil's needs are undertaken. St. Mary's N.S follows the Learning Support Guidelines (2000), under Reviewing Progress at the End of an Instructional Term (4.6.2)

#### 10. **Selection of pupils for individual psychological assessment**

St. Mary's N.S adheres to the recommended procedures as laid down by NEPS/DES.

Selection of pupils for individual psychological assessment takes into consideration the NEPS document 'Special Educational Needs - A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers' (2007). This continuum of support has 3 distinct school-based phases:

- Classroom support
- School support
- School support plus

A final selection of a pupil for a psychological assessment is made by the school Principal in collaboration with the NEPS psychologist linked to the school.

#### 11. **Supporting pupils with Behavioural, Emotional & Social difficulties**

St. Mary's N.S draws on the principles and practices outlined in Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support. A whole school approach to the management of pupils with behavioural difficulties is put in place in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour of the school. St. Mary's N.S emphasises early and ongoing liaison with parents.

#### 12. **Communication with parents/guardians**

The Special Education Policy promotes the active involvement of parents in discussing the outcomes of the initial diagnostic assessment. Effective communication is critically important to the success of the Special Education Programme. Close liaison with parents/guardians is

essential, as they have a wealth of knowledge about their child and can contribute in a unique way to the education process. Parents are invited to contribute to the diagnostic assessment by sharing insights into their child's development and learning difficulties. As well as providing general information to parents about the available Special Education Provision, the Special Education teacher

- Seeks permission to select their child for diagnostic assessment
- Meets with each pupil's parents to discuss the outcomes of the assessments, the learning targets and the actions to be taken to meet those targets
- Communicates on an ongoing basis with the parents either through face to face meetings, homework diary, home-school copy or by phone.
- Consults with parents when support teaching is to be discontinued
- Demonstrates techniques and strategies to parents that will enable them to help with their child's development.

**13. Links with outside agencies**

The Principal, in consultation with the Special Education team develops and co-ordinates links between the school and outside agencies/specialist services, such as an Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist, Psychiatrist, Occupational Therapist, HSE, NEWB, NCSE etc.

**14. Resources**

St. Mary's N.S has a wide range of resources to support their Special Education teaching programmes. All resources for Special Education are stored in a designated area in the school. Resources include:

- PM reading books Level 1 -24
- Picture books for older readers
- Lifeboat Read and Spell
- Sound Linkage
- PAT Phonological Programme
- Read, Write, Inc
- Jolly Phonics / Letters and Sounds
- New reading and Thinking
- Verbalising and Visualising
- Communication cookbook
- Alpha to Omega
- Englishtype Junior
- Numicon
- Jump ahead
- Lincolnshire 1<sup>st</sup> Move
- Friends for Life Resilience Programme
- 101 ways to teach social skills
- Time to Talk
- Socially Speaking
- The New Social Story Book
- Zones of Regulation
- Writing and developing Social Stories
- The Drawing Out Feelings Series
- Checklists

**15. Continuous Professional Development**

Professional development occurs in informal contexts in St. Mary's N.S. such as discussions among colleagues, independent reading and research, observation of other colleagues' work or other peer learning. The school is always eager to improve learning for teachers and pupils. Teachers get opportunities to attend courses specific to their professional development needs and to the needs of their pupils.

**16. Success criteria**

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil's learning in the following ways:

- Improved standard of academic achievement within the pupil's individual learning programme
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs, leading to increased awareness and openness
- Increased awareness of staff on monitoring targets
- Increased awareness and understanding among staff about strategies that support children's learning needs
- Improvement in percentile rank in standardised tests
- Increased opportunities for effective communication among school personnel in relation to pupil's progress

**17. Review**

The post holders have overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the Special Education Policy and this is an ongoing and developmental process. Staff and Board of Management will engage in the developmental process and the policy will be reviewed as the need arises.

**18. Ratification and Communication**

This curriculum policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **13 December '21**. It was then circulated to all staff members for implementation. A copy of the document will be incorporated into the Whole School Plan.

*Helen King*  
*Chairperson BOM*

*Brian McDonnell*  
*Principal*

*13-12-2021*  
*Date*

## **Appendix 1- Supporting Pupils Negatively Impacted by Covid 19 through CLASS** (Covid Learning and Support Scheme)

As schools were closed over two periods in 2020 and 2021 there has been significant disruption to in-school education over this period. While huge efforts have been made to provide remote teaching and learning during school closures, some pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, and those at risk of educational disadvantage may have experienced the impact of school closures in a very significant way. This impact is likely to have been further compounded by the loss of connectedness with school routines and engagement with teaching and learning. In the school year 2021/2022 it is intended to support pupils who have been most impacted by the disruption in the previous two school years.

Provision of extra resource through the CLASS (Covid Learning and Support Scheme) programme will aim to:

- Provide additional targeted teaching support for pupils who have struggled most during the period of school closures including those with more complex special educational needs and those at risk of educational disadvantage
- Provide access to additional teaching support for other pupils, who as a result of the impact of Covid now require targeted intervention to address their needs
- Ensure that pupils have a sufficient sense of physical, emotional and social wellbeing to engage in the learning
- Support co-curricular and extra-curricular activities to redress the negative impact on pupils' wellbeing and to continue to foster pupils' sense of safety, calm, efficacy and connectedness
- Identify and meet the gaps in learning, in skills, in readiness to learn or in the pupils' previously-identified priority learning needs in order to mitigate any potential regression in learning
- Allow for good routines to be re-established and maintained to the greatest extent possible so that all pupils can learn effectively
- Equip pupils with the necessary skills to experience success in learning throughout the school day

Pupils who access support through the CLASS scheme will be those who have been most affected by Covid. Priority will be given to those pupils for whom there is evidence that the Covid related school closures had a significant impact on their education, wellbeing and functioning in daily life. The scope of CLASS may therefore extend beyond pupils with SEN and the staff will endeavour to identify ALL pupils who have emerging needs arising from the impact of Covid. These pupils may include those who have already been identified and newly-identified pupils with emerging needs due to the impact of Covid.