



# **9. Gortnahoe National School**

## **Special Education Policy**



## **Introductory Statement**

Under the new General Allocation Model, from September 2017 – June 2019, Gortnahoe National School has an allocation of 54.75 hours of support teaching to meet the needs of the children in the school.

Changes to the previous policy arise from

- The introduction of the new General Allocation Model
- Changes in our practice in recent years with a greater focus on in-class/whole-class support and a reduction in model of withdrawing children for learning support.
- A perceived increase in social/emotional difficulties among pupils.
- Our ongoing commitment to ensuring that pupils experiencing learning/social/emotional difficulties receive the support that they need insofar as we can provide it
- Our ongoing commitment to support pupils in classes of 30 or more and large double classes.

In June 2017, the SET team undertook preparation for the introduction of the new model. Those involved in this process were Therese Meehan Special Ed. Co-ordinator and David O'Dwyer, Principal

This involved

- Reviewing whole class interventions for the 2017/18 school year and broadly timetabling projected interventions for 2018/19.
- Looking at the needs of those children who had resource hours under the previous model to ensure that their needs would continue to be met under the terms of our current provision.
- Allocating hours to the large double classes in the school to provide a variety of supports for it.
- Collating the Staged Approach information provided by class teachers as well as the standardized test results to ensure that children who will need interventions outside those that can be provided in class, have their needs met.

All class teachers were consulted prior to the proposed changes.



**Table 1: Enrolment for September 2018:**

<b>Name Of School</b>	<b>Roll No.</b>	<b>No. Of children on roll 2018-2019</b>
Gortnahoe N.S.	17580P	131

**Table 2: Allocation of 54.75 Hours**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Gortnahoe N.S</b>
<b>Ciara Ryan</b>	25 hours
<b>Mary Hurley</b>	25 hours
<b>Catriona</b>	5.5 hours

**Classroom Resources:**

The school has a Special Education classroom in the main building. Special Education teaching also takes place in 2 small rooms in the main building (formerly a cloakroom and office).

**Aims of SEN Policy:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- identify additional needs that our pupils may have
- allocate resources to effectively meet these needs
- divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs
- track, monitor, review and report on the progress of children with additional needs
- communicate information between the SET team, principal, staff and parents/guardians

As such we seek to comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000) and fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream



Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

### **Guiding Principles of SEN Policy:**

- All children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all of our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community.
- The resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs, will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school
- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines. Support will be offered taking into account the allocation available to the school and the appropriateness of the support in meeting the needs of the child.
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.

### **Inclusion:**

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document, aims to enable children with SEN to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

The following practical steps are in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included as fully as possible in the life of the school and the classroom:

- Educational outings
- School tours
- SPHE classes
- Paired/ Shared Reading/Literacy Lift-off etc.
- Drama
- P.E.
- Visual Art
- Swimming
- Religion

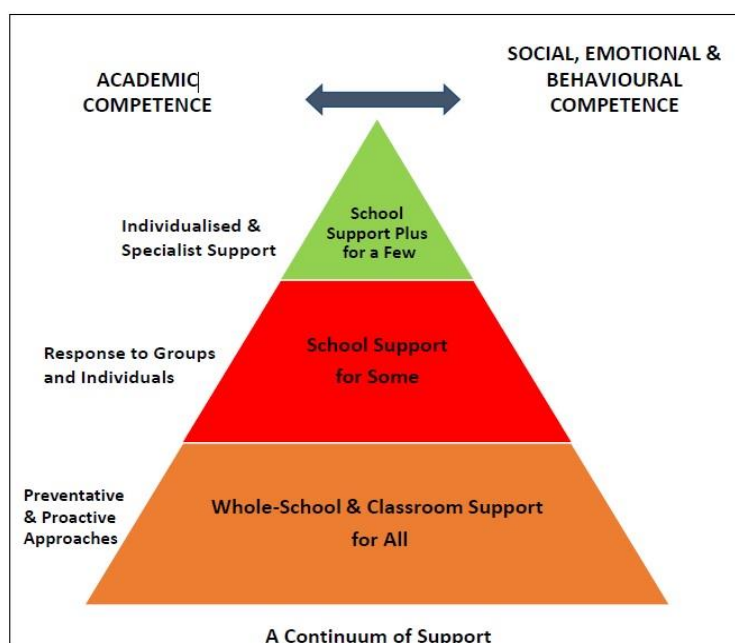


As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

### Identification of Additional Needs Pupils

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

**The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:**



*The flow how we identify children needs. A each found in Support teachers 12 - 35*

*diagrams outline gather information to needs and support with additional more comprehensive explanation of stage can be the Continuum of – Guidelines for*

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)



## Stage 1 Classroom Support

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher, Class Co-ordinator and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

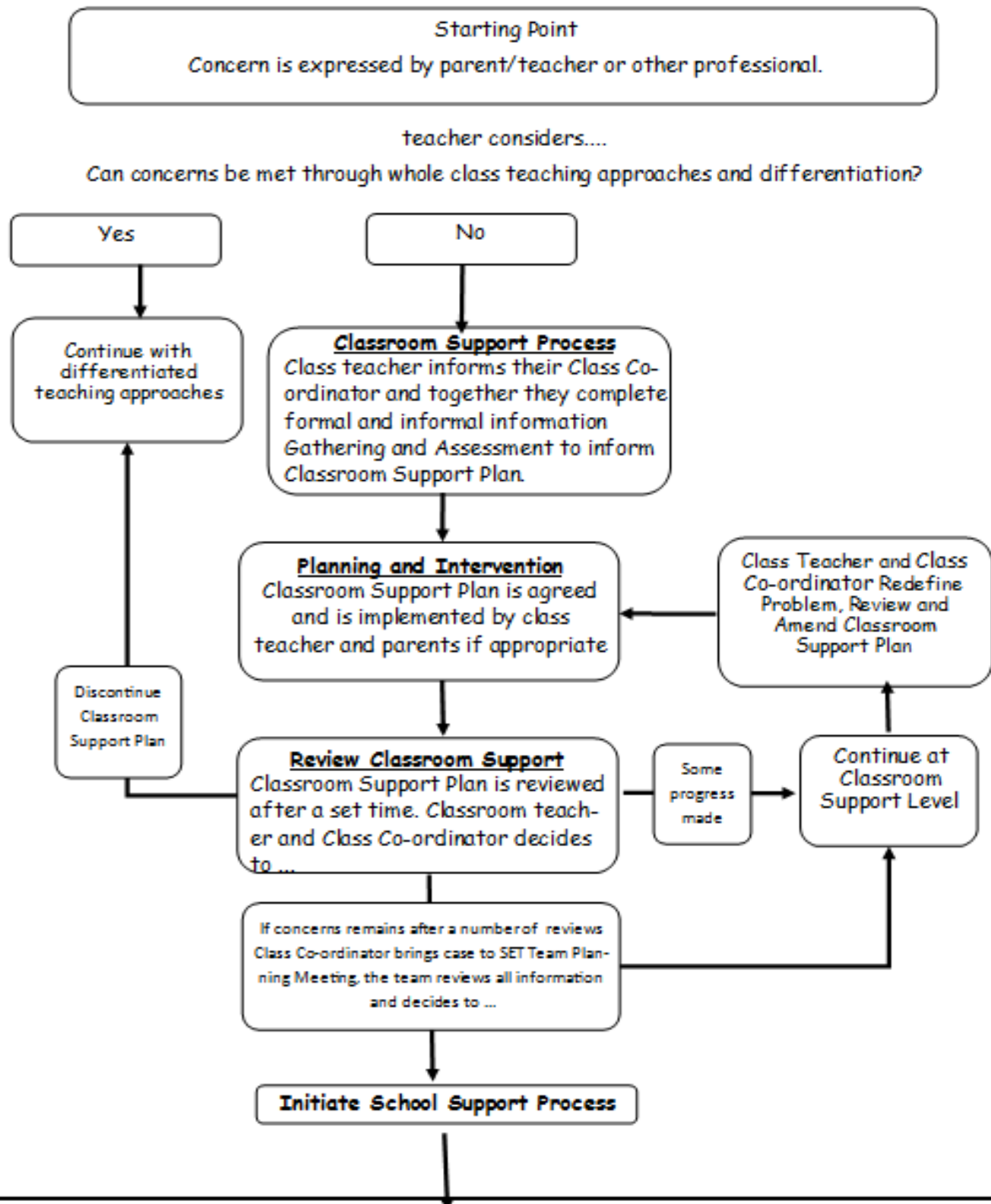
<b>Classroom Support</b>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parental consultation</li><li>• Teacher observation records</li><li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li><li>• Basic needs checklist *</li><li>• Learning environment checklist*</li><li>• Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist</li><li>• Literacy and numeracy tests</li><li>• Screening tests of language skills</li></ul> <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
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\*\*\*While most pupils' initial needs should be met through classroom based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school. \*\*\*

## CLASSROOM SUPPORT PROCESS

## STAGE 1



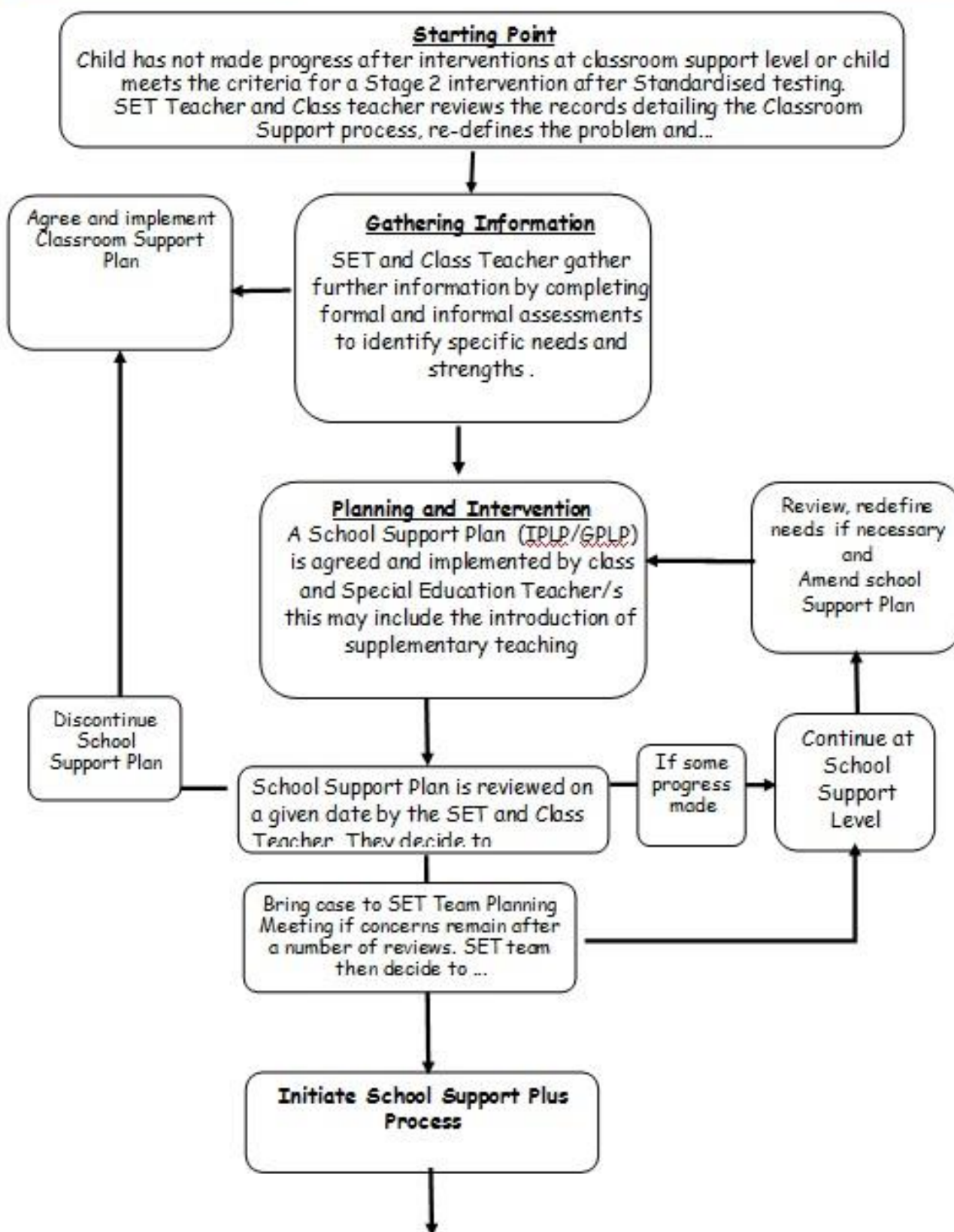


## Stage 2 School Support

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

<b>School Support</b>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher observation records</li><li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li><li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li><li>• Learning environment checklist</li><li>• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy</li><li>• Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures</li><li>• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</li></ul> <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.</p> <p>A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
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**SCHOOL SUPPORT PROCESS****STAGE 2**



### Stage 3 School Support Plus

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Where a pupil has a diagnosis/report from an outside agency, recommendations in the report will be considered in deciding what supports are offered. However, within the school, we may not always be able to offer the supports recommended. Also, we may not always feel that the recommendations are borne out by the evidence we have regarding a pupil. We retain the right to offer what we feel is the most appropriate intervention for each pupil, taking into account evidence from teachers, parents and any other agencies that may be involved. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of any intervention.

<b>School Support Plus</b>	<p>This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures</li><li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li><li>• Functional assessment</li><li>• Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc</li></ul> <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>
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## SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS PROCESS

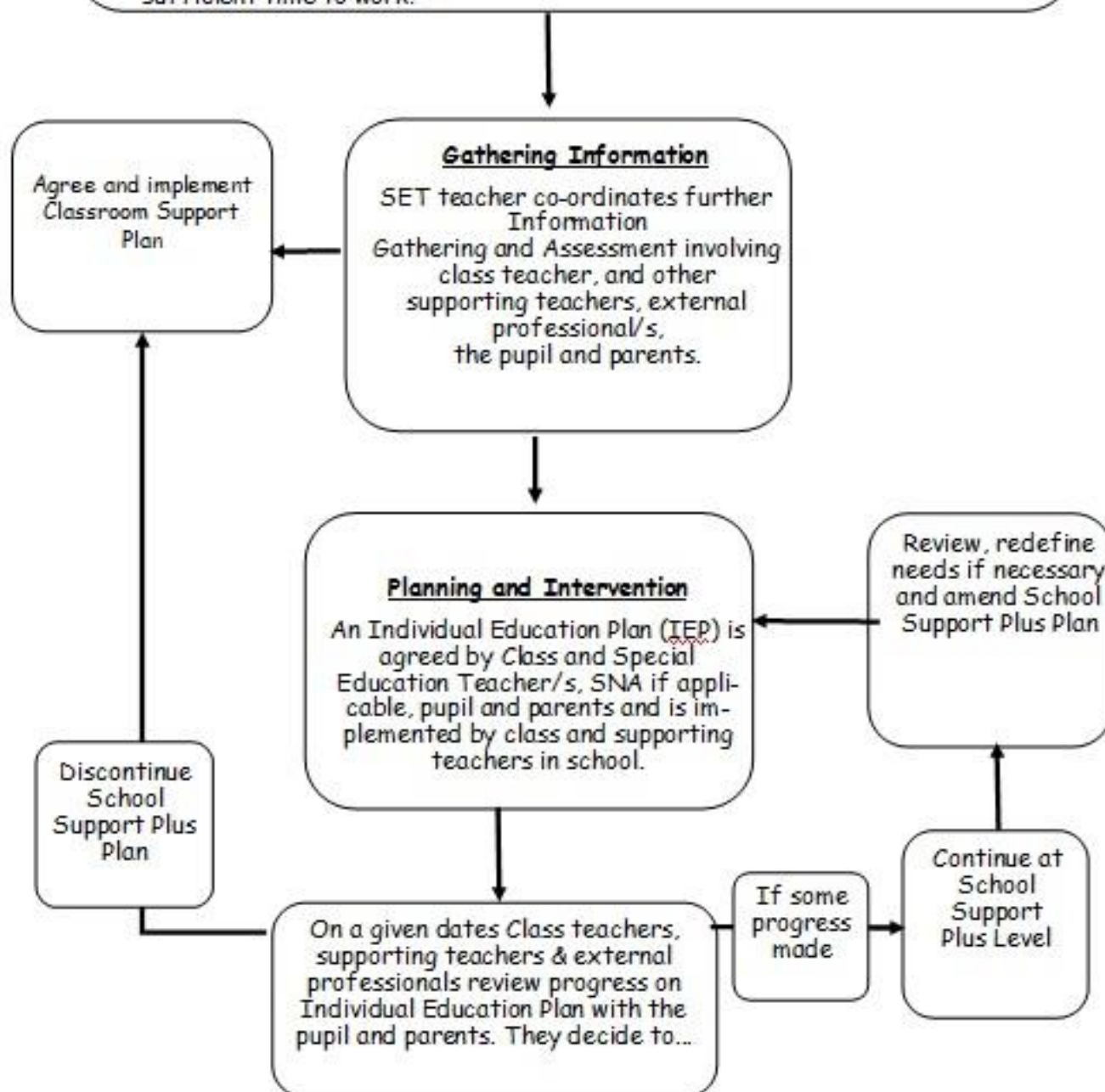
## STAGE 3

### Starting Point

Child has not made progress after interventions at school support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 3 intervention after a diagnosis from an outside agency.

SET and Classroom teacher considers...

- Are the pupils needs causing significant barriers to learning or impeding development of social relationships?
- Is progress inadequate despite support provided?
- Were interventions; based on evidence from assessment; well planned and given sufficient time to work?





## Information Gathering & Assessment

Class & SEN teachers will use their observations, class tests, standardized and diagnostic tests, parental input and reports from professionals involved with the child to create a list that includes every child in the class. It will record children who are not on the support continuum as well as those at stages 1, 2, 3. (See template). This list should be updated at regular intervals and presented to the SET team so that they have it for their reviews. These reviews take place

1. In June
2. At Halloween midterm
3. Before Christmas
4. At commencement of the final term.

However, if a child presents with a more pressing concern, there needs may be addressed at any time.

A useful step in identifying pupils who may need learning support in English or Mathematics is for the class teacher to administer one or more screening measures. The screening measures that are administered depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils concerned but the following will be administered annually:

- Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy Tests will be used in Senior Infants.
- Drumcondra Reading Test and Sigma-T Maths will be used from first class onwards.
- Drumcondra Spelling Test is administered every other year.
- Children in 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class may be tested using the MICra-T in the autumn term to provide a reading age which can be used to inform class teaching and literacy interventions.
- The NNRIT test is used in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> class.

In mathematics we focus on language development and development of mathematical procedures and concepts.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore, we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

\*Sometimes children may be included for support based on a teacher's experience and insight or where there are exceptional circumstances such as difficult home circumstances, ongoing poor performance not flagged in standardised tests, difficulties with processing etc.



## **Inventory of Test Materials:**

### **Screening Tests**

- Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy Test
- British Ability Scales 3: Word Reading Test
- Drumcondra English Reading Test
- Sigma-T
- New Non- Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)
- Jackson & Schonell – Diagnostic
- YARC
- Bangor Dyslexia Test

Belfield Infant Assessment Profile – B.I.A.P

### **Diagnostic Tests**

In our school the following tests are available for administration:

- Conner's Teacher Rating Scale - Revised
- Aston Index
- Quest Literacy and Maths tests
- Drumcondra Early Literacy Diagnostic Test
- Drumcondra Early Literacy Diagnostic Test
- NNRIT
- 
- Rain Sentence Reading Test
- 
- Neale Analysis



## Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

Our strategies for supporting the needs of children:

- Implementation of early intervention programmes in the early primary classes as an effective response to meeting the needs all children. These programmes:
  - Include a strong emphasis on oral language laying the foundation for meaningful reading - Aistear
  - Read Aloud Programme for the infants
  - Jolly Phonics with effective parental involvement – training during familiarization nights
- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
  - Jolly Phonics Programme throughout the school  
Using only decodable reading material in the infant room
  - Comprehension Strategies – Building Bridges
  - Listening Skills
  - Writing Genre
  - Dictation sentences
- Literacy Lift-off 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Literacy Interventions in senior classes.
- Comprehension programmes for senior classes
- Team Teaching for Problem-Solving in Maths – Senior Infants –Sixth Class
- Aistear in Junior and Senior Infants
- Social skills groups
- Withdrawing individuals/groups
- Maths Games e.g Numero

Each year we plan to use as many of the above listed interventions as we can resource and have time to provide. We may be in a position to introduce other interventions as our new model evolve or we may find that we have to reduce our intervention – this will depend on the needs of the children.

We also encourage

- Close collaboration and consultation between all teachers and the SET team.
- Promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g. Mental Maths
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy e.g. Homework Policy Guidelines for Parents.



## Allocation of Resources

### Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with SEN (Primary Guidelines P.19 & 20)

<b>Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs</b>	<p>Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).</p> <p>Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
<b>Action 2: Setting targets</b>	Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the continuum of support.
<b>Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches</b>	Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.
<b>Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes</b>	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.
<b>Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources</b>	<p>Cross-reference the needs of pupils at school support and school support plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place.</p> <p>Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.</p>
<b>Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress</b>	<p>Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers</li> <li>• At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers.</li> </ul>



Once a pupil's needs have been identified, where they have been listed as Stage 2/3, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. (Children at Stage 1 will have received in-class support from their teacher who may seek advice/recommendations from the SET). We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, whole-class interventions, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

At the end of each term the SEN teachers meet class teachers and review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. The SEN teachers then bring this information to the end of term SET team planning meetings. As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term. These reviews take place

- In June
- Before Christmas
- At commencement of the final term.







## SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT

<b>Stage 3 School Support Plus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Disability</li> <li>• Hearing Impairment</li> <li>• Visual Impairment</li> <li>• Emotional Disturbance</li> <li>• Moderate General Learning Disability</li> <li>• Severe/Profound General Learning Disability</li> <li>• Autistic Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>• Assessed Syndrome</li> <li>• Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment</li> <li>• Multiple disabilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Individual Education Plans</b>	<p><b>Type of Support</b>            In-Class Support            Team-Teaching            Group            Withdrawal            Individual            Withdrawal</p> <p><b>Personnel</b>            SET teacher            Class Teacher            Outside            Agencies</p>
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<b>Stage 2 School Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention and Early Intervention Programs (Aistear, Literacy Lift-Off, Literacy Interventions in Senior Classes, team-teaching for Maths problem-solving)</li> <li>• Children on or under the 12th Percentile in Literacy Standardised Tests</li> <li>• Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are on or below the 30th percentile in Literacy such as             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>2. Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>3. Specific Learning Disability</li> <li>4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Children on or under the 12th Percentile in Numeracy Standardised Tests</li> <li>• Children with an identified need by external professionals who are on or below the 30th percentile in Numeracy             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>2. Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>3. Specific Learning Disability</li> <li>4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1</li> </ul>	<b>Group or Individual Profile and Learning Programme</b>	<p><b>Type of Support</b>          In-Class Support          Team-Teaching Group          Withdrawal Individual          Withdrawal</p> <p><b>Personnel</b>          SET teacher          Class Teacher</p>
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## Roles & Responsibilities

To facilitate the effective implementation of a school policy on special needs and learning support- support services, the roles of the different partners – the Board of Management, Principal, Class teachers, SET, Parents and Pupils are crucial.

### Role of Board of Management:

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of school policy on special educational needs.
- To ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for special education teachers.
- To provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of special educational needs.

### Principal:

The principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central. He should

- Implement and monitor the school's SEN policy on an on-going basis.
- Ensure that the children with the greatest needs have the greatest provision.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles.
- Assign SET appropriately to ensure that the needs of the children in literacy/numeracy/social skills etc. are met.
- Assign SET teachers to liaise with each class.
- Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher
- Plan to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- Oversee whole school assessment
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress



- To work with teachers regarding external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals.
- To attend multi-disciplinary meetings regarding children with special educational needs.

**SEN Co-ordinator** (Post-holder in the school):

- communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- liaise with SET team to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- co-ordinate monthly SET team meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- oversee the tracking system of test results on Aladdin to monitor the progress of pupils
- maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support



## **Class Teacher:**

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

- implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines
- discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SET team to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress – SET may attend on invitation – it is important that the meeting is documented and recorded on Alladin and the SET and Co-ordinator are informed re same
- gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- maintain a list of children not included/included in the continuum of support and review this each term
- open a Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified which require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support
- collaborate with SET and parents to develop appropriate support plans
- collaborate with SET to regularly review support plans
- where applicable, collaborate with the SET team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching and whole class interventions
- adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- liaise with and seek advice from the SET team



## **Special Education Teacher (SET)**

The SET teacher should:

- familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs
- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- collaboratively develop Support Plans for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus.
- collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review support plans
- update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- support whole-school procedures for screening
- administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload
- discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- provide necessary information to an SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received
- At all times keep the SET co-ordinator up to date with meetings, plans and progress.

## **Special Needs Assistants: N/A**

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76).

## **Parents/Guardians:**

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

Parent/Guardian should:

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



- support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- Keep the school informed of any home factors which may affect the child
- inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage

Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of Special Educational Needs Programme. Activities that may be organised to increase the involvement of parents in supporting their children's learning, particularly parents in the Special Educational Needs Programme. Such activities include:

- Read Aloud Programme and Paired/Shared Reading.
- Developing children's oral language through discussion.
- Motivating children to learn more.
- Selecting high interest books for the children.
- Visits to places of interest to broaden the range of children's experiences.
- Encouraging children to use the library
- Engage children in activities to aid social and emotional development such as football, choir, drama, rugby etc.

Parents will be consulted regularly at all stages of processes outlined in this policy e.g.

- When a child is assessed as having needs that may require learning support
- When a child is identified as having behaviours/difficulties that may require further investigation within the school or by outside agencies
- During psychological assessments
- When a Support Plan – school/plus is being drawn up for a child
- When a review of a Support Plan means a significant change in the levels of out of class support being given to a child

### **Pupils:**

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

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





## **Tracking, recording and reviewing progress**

Provision for pupils with special educational needs relies upon clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of school-wide support of our pupils.

### **Student Support File**

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. All support files should include:

- Cover sheet with pupil's details
- A timeline of actions/ communications/ meetings
- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
- Support plans
- Checklists as appropriate

Beginning this year (2018), each class teacher in consultation with the Special Ed. Team will collate the results/checklists/observations/parental input etc. which has informed the supports provided for children during the year, to review the children in receipt of support – on the continuum and draw up a class list showing children who are ( see files on Aladdin)

- Not on the support continuum
- On Stage 1 of the continuum (Class support)
- On Stage 2 of the continuum (School support)
- On Stage 3 of the continuum (School Support Plus)

This list will be given to the SET team for the purposes of planning for the following year, as well as being passed on to the class teacher who will be working with the class for the next school year. The list will be maintained throughout the year and reviewed in line with the termly reviews of the SET team.

A class teacher should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 – Classroom Support on the continuum. This file will be stored on Aladdin. This hard copy will be signed, scanned and stored digitally on the child's individual profile on Aladdin.



## **Support Plans**

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support. These will replace IPLPs/IEPs for all children who are being newly placed on the support continuum. SETs may begin replacing IEPs/IPLPS for children currently (2018) with the new format support plans as they see fit.

### **Stage 1 – Classroom Support:**

A Support Plan at stage 1 is a **Classroom Support Plan**. (CSP) This is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with an SET which outlines the pupil's additional educational needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their child's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school term.

### **Stage 2 – School Support:**

A Support Plan at stage 2 is for a group or individual whose needs cannot be met by a class support plan. It is called a **School Support Plan**. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET teacher. The SET teacher involved will depend upon the needs of the child and who can most appropriately meet those needs. The plan will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan may, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil's response to the actions taken. Review of such a plan will depend on the nature and timescale of the interventions included in the plan but could be at the end of the school term.

### **Stage 3 – School Support Plus:**

A Support Plan at stage 3 is for an individual pupil whose needs cannot be met by a school support plan. It is called School Support Plus. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET, in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out:

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil
- The special educational needs of the pupil
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from including:



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

Meetings needed to draw up and review this plan will be co-ordinated by the SET who is working with the pupil. We envisage that School Support Plus plans will be drawn up by autumn midterm (October) each year and reviewed by spring midterm. (February) Parents will be invited to participate in this process. Our experience is that such plans are more long-term than class support or school support plans but, as always, this may vary depending on the needs of the child. In some cases, we may use short-term interventions and as such, we will plan and review accordingly.

### **Sharing/Storing Information and Plans**

Our systems for creating, sharing and storing support plans of pupils have been outlined above but here is a brief summary:

- Every pupil in the school has an individual profile on our digital portal Aladdin. All relevant files will be scanned and stored here including some of the following
  - Annual school report
  - Any reports relating to child's needs from outside agencies
  - Signed copy of any Support Plan which may have been drawn up for the pupil – replacing the plan from the previous year
  - The most recent standardized literacy and numeracy test which the child has taken
- Each teacher will maintain on Aladdin a class list which records the name of every child and states where he/she is with regard to the continuum of support. SET Team and co-ordinator have full access to this.
- Each teacher – class and SET - involved in supporting a child will have access to the child's electronic record so that he/she can update the record of support/interventions being provided to that child. This is the means by which Support Plans will be created, shared, reviewed and stored.
- Whole class records will be retained by the SET team – records such as running records, standardised tests, NNRIT etc.
- Individual tracking of pupils' results began in the 2014 – 2015 school year and is now standard practice beginning with the Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy tests in Senior Infants. This is stored electronically and can be accessed by the relevant class teacher, the principal and deputy principal and special ed. team. The class list



showing the nature of support being offered to the pupils in the class is passed on to the appropriate teacher at the end of the school year through Aladdin access.

## **Other Considerations with regard to SEN**

### **Enrolment of children with identified special educational needs:**

Parents enrolling children in the school can view our Enrolment Policy and Enrolment Form on the school website. Prior to the child's enrolment, the schools will acquaint themselves with a child's special needs by:

- Meeting between parents/principal/ class teacher/special needs staff and SENO as appropriate.
- Obtaining copies/details of reports, assessments etc. from psychologists, therapists etc.
- Contact with SENO, NEPS psychologist or other psychologist/speech therapist/Autism therapist/occupational therapist involved with the child.
- Liaison with family counsellor/ care worker where appropriate.

The following steps will be used to ensure a smooth transition into the school for both the pupil and the school.

- Parental visits to the school.
- Pupil visit to the school.
- Making all school employees and pupils aware of the need for the child with special educational needs to be educated in an inclusive environment.
- Liaison with SENO to arrange for individual personnel, resources, training where appropriate.

### **Referral of pupils to outside agencies including NEPS**

Where teachers feel it necessary to seek intervention of outside agencies they should

- Consult with the SET
- Speak to parents
- Inform the Principal

The NEPS psychologist attached to the school meets with or speaks with the principal and the SET at the beginning of the year to discuss the needs of the pupils and to plan the support which will be offered to the school. This may take the form of CPD for staff, of advice for teachers with regard to individual pupils/whole school concerns or, it may involve an assessment and psychological report for an individual pupil.



In the event of a limited availability of assessments through NEPS priority will be given to the pupil with the greatest need.

Where an assessment takes place in the school, the class teacher should oversee initial contact with parents. The Special Ed. Co-ordinator will liaise with assessment services. The relevant special education teacher will collect all documentation concerning the pupil's test scores. This will be co-ordinated by the principal.

In general, our school has access to approximately 1 psychological assessment annually through the NEPS scheme.

Teachers may also recommend to parents that children in need of support, especially in the case of behavioural/emotional needs, should be referred through a GP.

### **Transfer to Post Primary**

All children in 6<sup>th</sup> class will have an Educational Passport. This will be provided to Secondary schools upon request.

Where children with SEN are transitioning to the local secondary school, the 6<sup>th</sup> class teacher will liaise with the SET there.

The 6<sup>th</sup> class teacher will work to prepare the class for transition to secondary school. An SET may support this work.

An individual transition programme may form part of the support plan for some pupils in 6<sup>th</sup> as identified by consultation between the class teacher and SET.

### **Pupils with Exceptional ability**

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

The term exceptionally able is used to describe students who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of pupils. The school recognises that these students frequently also require additional support.

The NCCA has issued draft guidelines for teachers ('Exceptionally Able Students Draft Guidelines for Teachers', available on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) to assist in the assessment, differentiation of education and support of pupils who are exceptionally able or gifted.

Team teaching, literacy initiatives and classroom resources will help to cater for children in this category.

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

- Annual standardised tests
- NNRIT
- Psychological Assessments
- Teacher observation
- Parental observation



- Referral by other individuals, schools or organisations.

We seek to support pupils with exceptional ability by the following means:

- Differentiation of work
- Providing additional follow-on work of a higher level
- Whole class interventions such as Literacy Lift-Off
- Recommendations to parents
- Occasional engagement with experts in areas such as PE, Art Music, IT
- Exceptionally gifted children may be referred to the Centre for Talented Youth.

In some circumstances a teacher may draw up a class support plan for a pupil with exceptional ability.

### **Exemption from Irish**

Before granting an exemption from Irish, the school requires evidence of a specific or general learning disability from a qualified psychologist or in the case of a child with a sensory impairment, from a qualified medical practitioner. Children of foreign nationals who are resident in the country will also be granted an exemption from Irish, particularly if their grasp of the English language is limited, depending on their age etc. (as per circular 12/96)

### **Procedures**

- The school requires a written application for exemption from the parents/guardians of the particular child. It must be accompanied by documentary evidence such as age, previous schooling etc. and a psychologist's report (if relevant).
- The principal, in consultation with, class teachers will grant an exemption if warranted and will present a certificate of exemption to the parents in accordance with Circular 12/96.
- Note: The school no longer needs to send a copy of the exemption form to the DES. The school grants the exemption and keeps the form on file.

### **Related Policies**

The schools' curricular and organisational policies and plans take into account the needs of pupils with SEN, through differentiation of content and methodologies in curriculum areas.

Special needs are also reflected in the following policies: Enrolment, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying and Data Protection/ Record keeping



## **Appendix 1**

### **Inclusive Education in our school**

Diversity and difference characterises the society in which children live. A respect for and appreciation of human and cultural diversity is promoted and celebrated in GortnahoeNS.

#### **Aims of an Inclusive Education:**

EAL, traveller or any pupils from minority groups add to diversity of the school, contribute to the learning experiences of all pupils, and should leave the school proud of their own cultural identity.

We aim to provide an opportunity for pupils from varying backgrounds to develop their full potential in an atmosphere conducive to their needs, where they will feel accepted, encouraged, respected and supported.

#### **Promoting the cultural diversity of minorities:**

Gortnahoe NS endeavours to acknowledge and celebrate the culture of the all members of the school community throughout the school in the following ways:

- Displaying posters and artwork in the corridors and classrooms that reflect the diversity of the school population
- Ensuring that textbooks and material are free of bias and using materials and books that reflect all cultures
- Providing opportunities for collaborative learning through teaching methodologies
- Implementing a curriculum that is child-centred and relevant to the different groups in the school
- Fostering the principles of justice, equality and freedom of expression in all everyday dealings

#### **Different cultures and lifestyles are acknowledged in the school in the following ways:**

- The school plan has a positive and active policy on the promotion of an inclusive intercultural ethos, including a strong anti-racist and anti-bullying strategy
- Parents are welcomed into the school at all times
- Gortnahoe NS supports the involvement of parents in all aspects of their child's school life
- All pupils are involved in all activities, listened to and valued, and have a sense of belonging in the school
- The personal experiences of the pupil are used as a basis on which to develop new learning experiences

#### **In the Classroom:**

- Pupils from all communities are fully included in mainstream classes.
  - Pupils are placed in age-appropriate classes.
  - Pupils participate in all aspects of the Revised Primary School Curriculum.
  - With parental consent, pupils from the minority communities receive additional support from the SEN team according to their needs.
- Appendix 2**



### Letter of Consent for Additional Support in Gortnahoe NS

I/We have discussed \_\_\_\_\_ progress and educational needs with the class teacher and teacher for special educational needs and give consent for him/ her to receive additional support from the special education teacher.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### OR

I/We have discussed \_\_\_\_\_ progress and educational needs with the class teacher and teacher for special educational needs and **do not give** consent for him/her to receive additional support from the special education teacher.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian)

Date \_\_\_\_\_





## **Concluding Section**

### **Success Criteria**

The following points will be indicators of the success of the Special Educational Needs Policy.

- Pupils with special needs will be catered for.
- The progress of pupils with special needs will be monitored and recorded.
- Discussion/meetings with parents.
- Feedback from teaching staff, pupils, psychologists etc.
- Standardised test results
- Inspector's Reports.

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The roles and responsibilities of parents, teaching staff, principal and BOM have already been outlined in the policy

It is the role of the SENO to allocate the annual support provision to the school, based on the information provided to her by the principal.

Other agencies involved in meeting the needs of the pupils are the DES and NEPS. The school also relies on the support of a variety of therapists and psychologists in analysing the needs of our pupils.

### **Implementation, Ratification and Communication**

This policy has been drawn up in the 2017 – 2018 school year. It will be updated every two years when the school receives its allocation of support hours. The underlying principles, roles and responsibilities will be reviewed every 2 years.

The policy will be presented to the BOM at the first meeting in 2018. Following ratification, it will be published on the school web-site at the earliest opportunity.



This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of BOM)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_