



*"Great oaks from  
little acorns grow"*

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### **Special Needs Policy**

#### **Guiding Principles/Aims**

All children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. In Park N.S. we want all students to feel that they are a valued part of our school community. As far as possible it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to enable pupils with special educational needs to fully participate in the curriculum. We aim to promote collaboration among teachers in implementing a whole-school policy on special educational needs provision in the school. We aim to involve parents in supporting their children through their involvement in education and regular communication with school. We aim to establish and implement early intervention initiatives to enhance learning and reduce difficulties in learning. We are fully committed to the principles of inclusion and good practice in relation to special needs. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

#### **Three Principles of Inclusion**

**Setting Suitable Learning Targets** (*We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning*)

**Responding to Children's Diverse Learning Needs** (*We take into account the different background, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning*)

**Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Children** (*We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning if we do not address them through special arrangements*)

#### **The Revised Allocation Model**

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) recommended a revised allocation model to address a number of shortcomings highlighted in the Report Delivery for Pupils with Special Needs (2014). As a result the Department of Education and Skills decided to introduce the revised allocation model with effect from September 2017.

Under the revised model, the Department provides Special Education Teaching supports directly to schools based on their educational profiles (including baseline component). It offers schools greater autonomy to allocate teaching resources flexibly, based on pupils' needs, without the diagnoses of disability.

**Park N.S will adopt the following principles to guide the implementation of the Revised Allocation Model.**

- 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)
- The class teacher has the 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.
- To ensure that our duties, as set out in the Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education Welfare Act 2000 and Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004, are fully met, we will enable children with special educational needs to fully partake in the normal activities of the school in so far as is possible.
- We will identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible through a variety of assessments and teacher designed tasks and observations.
- Information then generated from this process is then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.

We will provide a graduated approach in order to match educational provision to children's needs as reflected in the Continuum of Support.

- We will develop a partnership with parents/guardians/carers in order that their knowledge, views and experience can assist in the provision of effective teaching and learning to address individual needs.
- In Park N.S, we will use some of the following methods to address the needs of all our students including children with special needs:

- In-class supports (Station teaching)

-Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms

-Collaborative problem-solving activities

- Withdrawal (Individual and group)

-Social Skills and OT Groups

-Differentiation

-SNA Support

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) will be used in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Interventions will draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers.
- The interventions in place will reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests.
- Support Plans will set out the targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and time-frame for review.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BOM, Principal and Staff will take the following steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

### **Board of Management**

The B.O.M. will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. The B.O.M. will ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the teaching and learning of children with special educational needs. The B.O.M. will provide a secure facility for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of special needs provision.

### **Principal**

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. The Principal will work closely with the SEN Team and will keep the BOM informed about the workings of this policy. In consultation with the SEN Team the Principal will consult with the SENO with regard to SEN provisional needs.

Under the New Allocation Model the Principal's role is central and includes the following;

- Developing inclusive whole-school policies and monitoring their implementation
- Assigning staff strategically to teaching roles, including SEN roles
- Co-ordinating teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensuring that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- Facilitate the professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with educational difficulties so that support may be provided
- Keep teachers informed of relevant CPD in relation to special educational needs.
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available, outside agencies and procedures with regard to referrals.

### **Prevention Strategies**

Implementation of early intervention programmes is an effective response to meeting the needs of children with educational difficulties. These programmes will be based on a shared expectation of success criteria by everyone involved, involve small group withdrawal, one to one teaching or in-class supports.

- Development of agreed approaches to teaching aspects of literacy and numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. This will involve a strong focus on oral language, phonemic awareness, use of concrete materials and agreed mathematical language.
- Provision of additional support in literacy and numeracy especially in the early years

- Provision of early screening assessments and early intervention programmes
- Provision of the Smart Moves programme to identify and improve difficulties in physical literacy in pupils

### **Monitoring Progress**

Teacher observation and teacher designed tests will play a significant role in monitoring and identifying educational progress and need.

Diagnostic and Screening Assessment Tools and Programmes will be used by the school to identify and monitor educational need provision for our pupils. Some of these include the Belfield Assessment Profile, the Middle Infant Screening Test, Drumcondra Early Literacy and Numeracy Tests, Drumcondra Reading and Spelling Tests, the Sigma-T Numeracy Tests and the Smart Moves Programme.

### **Mainstream Class Teacher**

Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. All mainstream class teachers should implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Once a pupil has come to the attention of the class teacher as having a need for school support then the teacher, in the context of ongoing contact with the pupil's parents makes them aware that their child is in need of additional support from the S.E.T. (Special Education Teacher). The parent must be offered additional support for their child in writing where they must accept or decline the place in writing.

### **Special Education Teacher**

Special Education Teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support.

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

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

Class teachers, Principal, Special Education Teachers should liaise with the SNA personnel of the school regularly to ensure that there is a clear understanding of how provision for children with special needs may be met.

The SEN Teacher is responsible for the consultative division, the implementation and monitoring of the school support and support plus plans in the school, along with his/her short terms plans and cúntais míosúile.

### **Parental Engagement**

Effective parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. The Continuum of Support process and the use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special needs. Parents can also support their children by developing their child's oral language through discussion, motivating their child to read more, select books that interest their child and involve their child in areas of numeracy such as measures and money.

### **Pupil Engagement**

Good engagement and participation in their own education has many associated benefits for pupils with special educational needs and can help enhance their academic, social and emotional outcomes. The Student Support File offers a useful framework for promoting pupil engagement and participation at all stages of educational planning and review.

### **Engagement with External Bodies and Agencies**

The class teacher, S.E.T. and principal co-ordinate the referral of pupils to outside agencies such as NEPS, OTS, Visiting Teacher Service, Speech and Language Therapists (HSE) and so on.

The Principal and/or class teacher meet with the parent to express the need for the referral and to seek consent. The principal or class teacher complete the referral form in consultation with relevant staff members. The external professional may visit the school to meet with parents, staff and pupils as needed and an assessment may be conducted in the school. This is followed by a return visit where the findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed. Support and guidance may be sought by Park N.S. such as from NEPS Psychologists, the local SENO, NCSE Support Services, the Inspectorate and HSE Professionals.

### **The Continuum of Support**

In Park N.S we will use the staged approach as outlined in the Continuum of Support. This will take the following structure/approach:

- The preventative and proactive approaches will involve a whole- school and classroom support for all students
- Through early intervention, intervention and identification of needs through a variety of processes including assessments and teacher designed tasks a group of individuals are identified for 'School Support'. This may be addressed through withdrawal or in class supports.
- The next stage in the Continuum of Support is where there is a need for individual/specialised support (School Support Plus). Children may need one to one support from the Special Needs Teacher and referral to external bodies and agencies. However inclusive best practice is encouraged as much as possible throughout the school day.

### **Enrolment**

In Park N. S we have an inclusive policy and we will follow the legislative requirements and principles stated in our Admissions /Enrolment Policy in relation to enrolling children with special educational needs..

## **Transitions**

Good planning and support for transition helps to ensure the successful transfer of pupils from pre-school to primary school, from primary to post-primary school and between special and mainstream settings. The NCCA has developed a suite of materials to support the reporting and transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary schools.(Educational Passport)-A special Educational Needs summary Form is included to support the sharing of information for children with identified learning needs.

### **Useful/ Resources/Websites/Guidelines/Programmes**

- Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support
- Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties: A Continuum of Support-Guidelines for Teachers.
- Assessment in the primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools
- The Learning support Guidelines
- Well-Being in Primary Schools
- Inclusive Framework
- Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan
- Student Support File
- Curriculum Access Tool for Students with GLD
- SESS Resources-[www.sess.ie/resources](http://www.sess.ie/resources)
- NCCA'S Special Educational Needs and the Primary Curriculum
- Friends for Life
- Smart Moves Programme
- PDST
- Managing Challenging behaviours-NEPS
- NCSE

## **Ratification**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

It will be reviewed in the first term 2022 or before this if legislation affects this policy's content

