

Special Education Needs (SEN) Policy

Scoil Naomh Lorcan, Omeath

	Date
Staff Consultation	10.09.2024
Parental Consultation	30.09.25
Ratified by Board of Management	19.11.25

Signed: P. Maguire

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 19/11/25

This policy:

- This policy is subject to review following the issue of NCCA Guidelines or at least every 3 years.
- Policy was drafted on: 11th September 2024
- Reformatted and restructured on: 2nd October 2025
- Further review by teaching staff: January – June 2025
- Ratified by the Board of Management on: 19.11.25

Glossary of acronyms

BoM	Board of Management
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
BPVS	British Picture Vocabulary Scale
CAPER	Children and Parents Enjoying Reading
IEP	Individual Education Plan
Micra-T	Standardised English Test
M.I.S.T	Middle Infant Screening Test
NEPS	National Educational Psychology Service
NRIT	Non-reading Intelligence Test
NVRT	Non-verbal Reasoning test
SENO	Special Education Needs Organiser
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SET	Special Education Teacher
Sigma-T	Standardised Maths test
SNA	Special Needs Assistant

2. The resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs, will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school
3. 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
4. The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs
5. 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

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.

3. The principles for inclusion

3.1 Setting Suitable Learning Challenges

To achieve these policy aims, the following will apply:

- Scoil Naomh Lorcan will give 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.
- Scoil Naomh Lorcan will use the 'Continuum of Support Process' as outlined in **Table 1** to identify educational needs. Identification of educational needs is central to setting suitable learning challenges for our SEN pupils.
- Scoil Naomh Lorcan school will, using the continuum of support framework, identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.
- It is important to look at a pupils' needs in context, and to use our resources to support this (for example, learning environment checklist, teacher checklist for whole-class structures and supports).

3.2 Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs

Scoil Naomh Lorcan will take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning.

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process

<p>Classroom Support</p>	<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"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Basic needs checklist * • Learning environment checklist* • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
<p>School Support</p>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <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>
<p>School Support Plus</p>	<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"> • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social,

Table 2. Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs
(Primary Guidelines, P19-20)

<p>Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs</p>	<p>Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals.</p> <p>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>
<p>Action 2: Setting targets</p>	<p>Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the continuum of support.</p>
<p>Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches</p>	<p>Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support.</p> <p>Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching.</p> <p>They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.</p>
<p>Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes</p>	<p>Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.</p>
<p>Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources</p>	<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.</p> <p>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>
<p>Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress</p>	<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"> • At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers • At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers.

teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area

4.4 Special Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs
- Organises the timetable for support teaching
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers and contributing to in-service training of staff
- Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs
- Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision
- Keeps a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching
- Facilitating planning for class teacher with support teacher
- Supports the implementation of a tracking system at a whole-school level to monitor the progress of children who avail of additional support
- Keeps teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals
- Advises parents on procedures for availing of special needs services
- Selects children for psychological assessment in consultation with class and support teachers and with NEPS.
- Liaises with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children with SEN
- Liaises with SENO regarding all aspects of special education provision
- Stores confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN children and shares same with principal, class teachers, support teachers, SNAs, other agencies where appropriate.
- Participates in and or oversees the drafting of IEPs, IPLPs and classroom support plans
- Arranges for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

4.4 The Role of the Class Teacher

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes.

Accordingly, classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.

This will include adapting their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern.

identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary.

The type of support offered depends on the child's individual needs and takes the form of:

- curriculum support
- life and/or social skills training
- physical training/gross motor development
- speech training/communication and/or language development
- behaviour modification programmes
- assistance with sensory modulation
- development of anger management strategies
- a combination of some/all of the above.

Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant continuum of support plan.

Short-term planning 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 specific needs on a weekly 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.

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of the special educational needs provision available in the school.

Our school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school.

4.6 Parental Involvement

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. Parental engagement is enhanced when parents are consulted in relation to their children's needs and strengths, on the supports and strategies being developed to support their children, and when they are involved in regular reviews of progress.

The Continuum of Support process and 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 educational needs. There may also be opportunities for parents to work collaboratively with the school through initiatives such as paired reading or Children and Parents Enjoying Reading (CAPER).

5.2 Resources

Scoil Naomh Lorcan is a well-resourced school, which constantly monitors and updates its resources. I.T. provision is good and is updated regularly.

5.3 Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

5.3.1 Promotion of Literacy

The school will promote the skills in reading and literacy, including:

- Whole school promotion of Reading for Pleasure Record in journals.
- Building Bridges Comprehension Strategies
- Genre Writing
- Literacy Lift-off in senior infants,
- Guided Reading from Senior Infants to 4th class, TSI in 5th and 6th classes.
- Print rich environment,
- Shared/paired reading,
- Story time, Library time, DEAR time, Bi-annual Book Week, Book Fair, Word games, Class library, visiting authors,
- Access to Literacy apps on school chrome books and at home

5.3.2 Early Intervention

At Scoil Naomh Lorcan we believe it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible so that effective interventions can be put in place. Screening tests are administered in Junior Infants during their second term in school. The Middle Infants Screening Test M.I.S.T. is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants during the second term of the school year.

Pupils who present with scores below a given point are selected to participate in the Forward Together Programme. The parents of these pupils are invited to attend weekly meetings for an 8-10-week period. These meetings are facilitated by the Special Education Support teachers in Senior Infants.

The focus of these meetings is to effectively promote Literacy in the home and to support parents regarding best practice in this area. Each week a particular aspect of Literacy is explored through various activities. During the following week, parents put into practice the strategies and activities explored at the meeting. Where it is not possible for parents to attend the programme is run with the children by the SET teachers.

At the end of the 8-10 weeks, every participating pupil is re-tested (using M.I.S.T.) to measure progress made as a result of this early intervention.

Table 3

Register of Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard
School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports	Focus of Support

Class teachers initially discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

The triggers for this intervention could be:

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
- Has sensory or physical difficulties
- Has communication and/ or relationship difficulties

2. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including IEP targets and strategies.
3. The triggers for extra intervention could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child:
 - Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
 - Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
 - Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
 - Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and IEP
 - Has sensory and/or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
 - Has an ongoing communication or relationship difficulty that prevents social development, and act as a barrier to learning.
4. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child has care needs, a special needs assistant may be applied for.
5. In circumstances where a child uses specialised equipment, consultants will be required to demonstrate how the equipment is to be used to at least two SNAs and either the class or support teacher. The SEN co-ordinator should also be present.
6. The use of specialised yard equipment may also need to be demonstrated to these staff members. Courses will be provided on an ongoing basis to train staff in the relevant areas.
7. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from Irish, the Principal will see to this under guidance from the Department of Ed. And Skills.

Individual Education Plan

Based on Psychologist's report, tests, Record of Differentiation and School Action Plan the class teacher with the support teacher, SNA (if assigned), parents and representatives of outside agencies (if necessary) formulate an Individual Education Plan.

These IEPs, which employ a small – steps approach, feature significantly in the provision that we make in school. By breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded targets, we ensure that the child experiences success.

This plan includes:

- the nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills
- the degree of the child's special needs,
- the present level of performance,
- services to be provided,
- services for transition to 2nd level school where appropriate,
- the termly goals, which the child is to achieve.

The strategies set out in the IEP will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting.

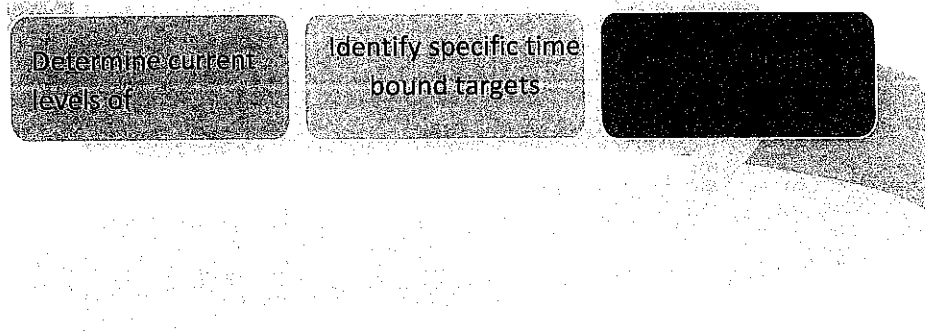


Figure 1. The Monitoring and Reviewing process flow

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

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

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

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

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

APX1.3 Student Support File, Log of Actions

Date	Actions

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*	<i>Classroom Support</i> <i>School Support (Support for SOME)</i> <i>School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)</i>
-------------------------------	--

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions. For help, see 'SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'BESD: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers', 'Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools'.

Student's Name:	Class/ Year:
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review:
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?	
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?	
Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan? If so, how?	
Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?	
Any comments from the student?	
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?	
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s):	
Signature of teacher(s):	

Outcome of Review (tick as appropriate):	
Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support	Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
Continue at Current Level of Support	Request consultation with other professionals

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this review

Appendix 3: Support Checklist

APX3.1 Support Checklist

Support Checklist		
Name	Age:	Class
General Information:	Date Checked	Comments:
1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Consulted:		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered:		
3. Hearing:		
4. Vision:		
5. Medical Needs:		
6. Basic Needs Checklist Completed:		
7. Assessment of learning- screening:		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning:		
9. Observation of Behaviour:		
10. Interview with Pupil:		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		

APX4.3.2 Catering for Pupils with Exceptional Ability

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able (IQ of 130+) will be catered for within the classroom based on a differentiated programme of work or if deemed possible by the Principal may be offered extension classes on a withdrawal basis, subject to the approval of the pupil and their parents. These classes will form part of each SET's timetable where feasible.

APX4.3.3 Responsibility and Management

1. The class teacher is responsible for differentiation within the classroom, including acquisition and distribution of teaching resources for differentiation.
2. The SET team will be responsible for the assessment stage of this process, organisation of extension classes including timetabling (where applicable), acquisition and distribution of information regarding referral and assessment by outside agencies.
3. The Principal will liaise with parents, SETs and class teachers throughout the process.
4. According to guidelines for professional development, costs will be paid by thing BoM to teaching staff who attend in-service training and courses about giftedness.

Appendix 5: IEP Planning/Review Sheet

IEP Planning/Review Sheet

Name of Student: _____ Class: _____

Progress to Date/ Strengths:

(The nature and degree of the child's abilities, skills and talents)

Areas for Improvement/Presenting Difficulties:

(The nature and degree of the child's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her progress)

(The present level of educational performance of the child)

Summary of Special Educational Needs:

(The special educational needs of the child)

Special Educational Provision:

(The special education and related support services to be provided to the child)

Further Information: