

Special Educational Needs Policy

Introduction:

Le Chéile National School is a vertical, co-educational school under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Limerick. It is a designated DEIS band 1 school.

In our school we are dedicated to helping each child to achieve his/her individual potential. The provision of a quality system of learning support and resource teaching is integral to this commitment.

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs:

3 Learning Support Teachers under GAM

4 Resource Teachers based on LIH from NCSE

1 ASD Class

1 EBD unit

HSCL co-ordinator

6 Special Needs Assistants.

The building is wheelchair accessible, has a lift and wheelchair accessible toilets on both floors.

Access to and participation in the above facilities is governed by the following policies:

- Learning Support Policy;
- Resource Teaching Policy;
- ASD Enrolment Policy.

Currently Small Group Literacy Instruction and /or Literacy Lift Off takes place in all classes throughout the school. Resource and Learning Support teachers are deployed to facilitate this. As a result all children are reading at their own ability level. Children are grouped using Reading Recovery style tests and WRAT4.

Rational:

The purpose of the SEN policy is:

To enshrine the principles of inclusive education, whereby pupils with special education needs are provided with an appropriate education in an inclusive learning environment. To provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support for pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties.

The provision of support for children with special educational needs is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experience. It is important that all partners contribute to the planning and implementation of our school plan on Special Educational Needs.

Enrolment of children with a disability and/or special education need.

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school's current Enrolment Policy. However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

1. A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the school, including those with a disability and /or special educational needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the staff and Board of Management. The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support and supervision beyond that which is offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year. The class teacher, and Resource Teacher (if any) will periodically be required to participate at staff development and Curriculum training courses. Such professional development events take place within the existing school year, and all the children, including pupils with a disability and/or special educational needs are in the care of their parents at the times. Such extraordinary closures will be notified to parents of all pupils by letter /notice and through the school's Facebook page.
2. A child with a disability and/or special educational needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will not have any separate or additional provisions put into place from his peers in the event of staff illness, absences or whole school events.
3. From year to year the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in personnel.

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/special educational need. To ensure this, we require:

- A close level of co-operation between parents, the class teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
- Parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times
- Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis
- An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.
- Every child in the school is bound by the school policies in place e.g. Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying.

Learning Support Policy

The principle aim of Learning Support is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school(ref. Learning Support Guidelines). Central to this process is the enhancement of classroom based learning and includes, as appropriate supplementary teaching by the learning support/resource teacher in the classroom, team teaching, or withdrawal to support room.

Specific Objectives of Learning Support

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level;
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning;
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability;
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning through effective parent support programmes/ activities.
- Promote collaboration among teachers.
- Establish early intervention programmes and other programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent / reduce difficulties in learning.

Guiding principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Effective whole-school policies;
- Whole school involvement;
- Provision of intensive early intervention.
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.
- Parental involvement.

Prevention Strategies

The school recognises the importance of having appropriate prevention strategies and also identifying and assessing children with special needs as early as possible, so that effective measures can be put in place. As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are being implemented:

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to oral language development,
- Focus on early intervention/ additional support in infant classes especially junior infants.
- Information gained from the enrolment form.
- Information /checklist passed from Early Start teacher to junior infant teacher.

- The Belfield Infant Assessment profile is administered by a SEN team member in consultation with the class teacher in term two of Junior infants.
- Early screening of pupils by Speech and Language therapist followed by consultation and support.
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, and provision of regular school newsletter;
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The role of supporting learning is a collaborate responsibility shared by all- the BOM, principal, class teachers, learning support /resource teachers, special needs assistants ,parents and pupils. In attempting to achieve the aims of the policy all reasonable steps will be taken within the limits of resources available, to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy and Learning Support Guidelines 2000.

Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Facilitate the development, implementation and review of the provision of Learning Support in the school
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support Teachers
- Provide a secure facility for storage or records in relation to pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in Learning Support for staff.

Principal

The role of the principal is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support in the context of Special Needs Education.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on Learning Support on an ongoing basis.
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed.
- Facilitate teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support

Special Needs Co-ordinator

The role of the Special Needs Co-ordinator is to:

- Co-ordinate the administration of diagnostic tests and the recording of test results;
- Co-ordinate and manage resource education in the Special education department of the school in collaboration with the staff and Principal;
- Record and file test results and psychological assessments for inspection by the Department of Education & Science in collaboration with the Principal and staff;
- Identify children with specific learning difficulties in collaboration with other members of staff and the Principal;
- Liaise with the appropriate personnel to ensure that parents and or guardians are thoroughly informed on assessment purposes and procedures to allay any anxieties that might surround the process or possible outcomes;
- Facilitate the process of assessment with the Educational Psychological Service of the Department of Education & Science in collaboration with the Principal and staff;
- Facilitate educational psychological assessment in the event of the service being secured through outside funding or sponsorship;
- Attend to the preparation and completion of consent forms together with other pre and post assessment paperwork;
- Meet and liaise with the relevant parties to ensure continued development of the Special Education Needs of pupils in attendance in the school;
- Liaise with the Board of Management and Principal to ensure the ongoing provision and development of Special Education Needs in the school;
- Formulate a school policy on Learning Support, Resource Time Education and Special Class Education in collaboration with the staff to be reviewed regularly and approved by the Board of Management and included in the School Plan.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on Learning Support, the class teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures.
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the Learning Support Teacher in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
- When supplementary teaching cannot be provide or is phased out or discontinued, the class teacher will develop and implement a support programme that meets the pupil's changing needs , in consultation with the LS/RT

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

- Accessing information/results from previous class teacher/Learning Support teacher
- Priority when establishing parental contact
- Group teaching
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
- Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
- Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
- Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
- Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
- Setting up 'buddy systems' in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring / paired reading)
- Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement

A key role of successful Learning Support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes

Learning Support Teacher

The role of the Learning Support Teacher is to:

- Administer Diagnostic Tests at the beginning/end of school year e.g. ?
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies designed to enhance early learning and /or address learning difficulties.
- Develop an individual learning programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the class teacher and parent(s) where possible.
- Maintain, plan and record progress for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- Assist in the delivery of early intervention programmes and provide supplementary teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria; caseload permitting.
- Contribute to the development of policy on Learning Support at whole school level
- Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room.
- Making the principal aware of issues that arise in the implementation of the learning support programme.

Parents

The role of parents supporting the Learning Support for their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Encouraging the child to visit library
- Developing the child's oral language
- Developing the child's social mathematics
- Participating in programmes organised by the HSCL Co-ordinator e.g. 'Kidstalk', Maths for Fun

Special Needs Assistants

Special needs assistants form part of the learning support team, along with the learning support and resource teacher. The duties of the SNA are assigned by the principal in accordance with DES circular. All duties are of a **non – teaching nature**. Under no circumstances will an SNA be left in sole charge of a class. Their role will be:

- To foster the participation of special needs pupils in the social and academic process of the school.
- To enable pupils to become independent learners.
- To work as part of the learning support team and the wider school community to promote an inclusive curriculum and environment for children with special needs.
- Work closely with the class teacher to develop a plan as how best to support an individual child's needs.
- When / if required, to report to parents on how the child is coping in school in terms of their particular social, emotional or physical needs.

Selection of Pupils for Learning Support

- The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Senior Infants to second class are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support;
- In Junior Infants pupils are screened using teacher observation;
- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests i.e. Mist, Micra T and Sigma T, WRATH4.
- Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 20th Percentile, excluding in the main pupils who receive Resource Teaching;
- In the case of pupils performing at or below the 20th percentile, the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil's performance, and supplementary teaching is offered following written parental consent;
- In the allocation of places for Learning Support, the following are prioritised:
 1. Senior Infants identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in literacy;
 2. Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in numeracy;

3. Children from Rang 1 to Rang 4 functioning on or below 20th percentile are prioritised for Learning Support in Literacy and Numeracy;
4. Learning Support may be given to children in Rang 5 and Rang 6 where resources permit;
5. Teacher observation may also be taken into account.

Provision of Supplementary Teaching

- The primary work of the Learning Support Teachers is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above;
- Learning Support case load will comply with DES Guidelines;
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil;
- Team Teaching may be employed if same is deemed beneficial to pupils;
- The Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher will meet to devise an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Group Education Plan (GEP), in consultation with the Principal and parents. The pupil involved may also contribute to setting their own short-term targets
- If a pupil is receiving support from a Resource Teacher in English / Maths, s/he will not normally be provided with supplementary teaching from the Learning Support Teacher as well.
- If the pupil is in receipt of support from a Resource Teacher to address other needs, e.g. behavioural problems, sensory difficulty, it may be appropriate for the Learning Support Teacher to provide supplementary teaching as well
- The Learning Support Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:
 1. Individual Profile and Learning programme
 2. Short term planning and programme record
 3. Other records, e.g. tape recordings of oral work
 4. Samples of written work
 5. Reading analysis records

Individual Learning Plan / Group Education Plan

The Individual Learning Plan / Group Education Plan will be in accordance with the proforma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000.

The plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details from the Class Teacher
- Assessment Results
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority Learning Needs
- Learning Targets
- Class based Learning Activities
- Supplementary support activities to include ICT
- Home Support Activities

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation; the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

A review will take place at the end of each term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet the parents to discuss the child's progress at formal Parent/Teacher meetings. The Parent/Teacher may arrange additional meetings if required.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- In general, children should not stay for more than 2 years in Supplementary Teaching, unless they are still at or below the 12th Percentile
- A decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching based on Standardised Test Results.
- The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher, and the pupil's parents, and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.

The criteria on which the decision will be made include:

1. Whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets;
2. Whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context;

Timetabling

- The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching.
- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend Learning Support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised;
- The provision of Learning Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition;
- In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the class teacher and the Learning Support Teacher, and reviewed at SEN team meetings.
- Copies of timetables are filed in the Whole School Plan folder will in the Principal's office.

Provision of Resources

- Teacher Allocation: The SEN team will meet and decide on the allocation/caseload of each LS/RT, taking into account – 1) the programme needs of the individual pupils 2)the time available to the pupils and 3) the expertise of the SEN teachers.
- Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books, ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- Following consultation between the Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Class Teacher requests for materials may be made to the Board of Management.

- Learning Support resources will be primarily be used in the learning Support Rooms. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher

Referral / Links to out of School Agencies

Following consultation with the class teacher, the principal or Special Needs Co-ordinator arranges the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist

The principal meets with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.

The principal or HSCL will if necessary support the parent(s) in the completion of any forms / referrals to outside agencies. The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.

Assessments take place within the school and involve pupil, parents and psychologist

This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.

Contacts with the HSE social workers will be primarily through the principal in the first instance and if necessary subsequently with the class teacher.

Referrals to SLT are made by the principal in consultation with Early Start staff, or in junior infants as soon as the need is identified.

Arrangements for Creative Therapies, currently delivered by Bluebox staff are made by the HSCL coordinator in consultation with the class teachers and principal. There are also regular meetings and communication between HSCL and the EWO.

Continuing Professional Development:

We believe in a whole school approach to special education needs. Key members of staff who have experience, training and who consistently model good practice are involved in supporting and up skilling other staff members. New teachers to the SEN team and all teachers are informed, encouraged and facilitated where possible to avail of CPD opportunities.

Resource Teaching Policy

Entitlement to Resource Teaching

When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 12th percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment. The principal or SEN co coordinator may oversee initial contact with parents regarding referral for assessments and may then be supported by a Resource Teacher.

1. A psychological assessment will be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004). Cf previous section ; referral/ outside agencies
2. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise and /or meet to devise a range of provision including IEP targets and strategies.
3. The triggers for intervention for resource 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 sensory and/or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service;
 - Has ongoing communication or relationship difficulties that prevent social development, and act as a barrier to learning.
4. When the special educational needs of the child has been confirmed by the psychologist an application for resource hours will be forwarded to the SENO. The SENO will determine whether the child falls into the category of Lower Incidence or High Incidence. Lower incidences will be awarded resource hours while the school makes provision for High incidence cases under the Weighted system.
 5. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child is not coping in the classroom setting, a special needs assistant may be applied for to the NCSE.
 6. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from Irish the Principal will see to this under guidance from the Department of Education & Science.
 7. If a parent refuses to give consent for a psychological assessment, he /she will be requested to sign a form stating this. Reference will also be made (without identifying the child) to this and noted in the minutes of the next Board of Management meeting.

The Role of the Resource Teacher

The Resource Teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. In addition, the Resource Teacher should advise and liaise with other teachers, parents and other professionals in the children's interests. More specifically, the Resource Teacher has responsibility for:

- Administering Diagnostic Tests at the beginning/end of the academic year e.g. WRATH4, Neale Analysis, YARC
- Developing an individual learning programme for each pupil in consultation with other partners in education
- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal
- Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
- Team teaching when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
- Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, eg psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers

Role of Class Teacher, Parents, Principal, Board of Management and Special needs assistants.

The role of all the above in the education of children who have been allocated resource teaching is as in the preceding section, i.e. the section on Learning Support.

Record Keeping

A file is kept containing relevant information pertaining to the pupil with special needs ie. Psychological assessments, SLT reports, OT reports, NCSE applications /allocations.

Access to this file is granted to parents, class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, psychologists, health workers (with parental permission)and SENO. These files are locked in a filing cabinet in the Principal's office.

Reports will be maintained in the school until the pupil reaches 21 year sold.

Success Criteria

- The school wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:
- Improved standards of achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme;
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support based on positive assessment results
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs;
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil's progress.

EBD/ADHD UNIT Policy

Specific criteria for admission to the EBD/ ADHD unit apply and a child must meet these criteria to be considered for admission.

The following criteria will be considered when applicants are being prioritised for admission to the class

- Prior to an admissions committee meeting, a Psychological report indicating a SLD as defined by the Department of Education & Science Circular 01/05 and a Diagnosis of ADHD or EBD by a Psychiatrist are forwarded for each child;
- Evidence of ongoing treatment;
- Recommendation for placement in unit by Psychiatric services;
- Further supplementary information may be requested from parents/guardians and from the child's school/teacher;
- Pupils already attending the school;
- Severity of specific learning disability;
- Adequacy of current placement in meeting the child's needs;
- Ability to benefit from placement;
- Within 15 miles of the school;

- Age range of pupils;
- Class range;
- Application assessed and approved by Admissions Committee comprising Principal, class teacher, ADHD/ EBD Unit teacher, and Special Needs Co-ordinator.

ASD class policy

Cf : ASD enrolment policy

Communication.

The operation of an effective communication system between all parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential.

- Regular SEN team meetings are convened by the principal.
- The NEPS psychologist meets with the team for review of progress, advice and planning on each school visit.
- SEN is included in staff updates and at staff meetings.
- Shared planning between LS/R teachers and class teachers takes place as part of the HR schedule.
- The HSCL coordinator is involved in the sharing of information with parents and teachers.
- A copy of this policy is emailed to each staff member. An electronic copy is kept on the school’s computer in the office. A hard copy is kept in the School Plan in the principal’s office.
- A copy is available to parents on request or on the school’s website.

Review.

A review will be initiated by the principal every two years. The review and revision if necessary will keep in line with changes in SEN policy as laid down by the DES and will be conducted by the SEN team in consultaion with the whole staff.

Ratification.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Mangement on

And will be reviewed in

Signed: _____
Chairperson BOM

Appendix I

Re: Standardised Testing

- Tests to be administered and corrected by class teacher.
- Learning Support and Resource Teachers may help where required.
- Tests to be administered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only.
- Guidelines in Test Manuals to be followed strictly.
- In the interests of fairness & standardisation strict adherence to the scoring instructions is ESSENTIAL.
- Class record sheets to be completed and returned to Special Needs Coordinator on or before the second Friday of June.
- Results to be recorded in descending order of achievement i.e. highest score at the top of the list.
- Test papers to be forwarded to the teacher who will be taking the class the following year.
- Record sheets and Test Manuals to be returned to Special Needs Coordinator.

