

2009



**Special Educational Needs
Whole School Policy**

Rathfarnham Educate Together N.S.

1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Rathfarnham Educate Together National School (R.E.T.N.S.) is a multi-denominational co-educational national school with just over 200 pupils on roll. In September 2009 there are 3 full time positions and one part time position on the support team. This is a revision of the previous whole school policy on special needs which was ratified in March 2005 and was in effect until 2009. The framework for this plan was discussed at a staff meeting in Spring 2009 and feedback received from staff was used to inform aspects of policy making. The Principal and support teachers (2009-2010) were responsible for revision and redrafting of the current policy. The working group reviewed current practice in the school with particular reference to practices that have been successful and those that need to be developed.

At present there are three full time support teaching positions, providing both learning support and resource, with an additional 18 hours part-time (DES circular 0024/2009) plus 2 hours EAL support.

1.1 Vision

In R.E.T.N.S. the characteristic spirit of the school, which can be identified in all classroom activities, the school playground, staff room and all school committees, is guided by four founding principles. They state that education should be:

- Child centered
- Democratic
- Multi-denominational
- Co-educational

The characteristic spirit of the school provides pupils, staff and parents/guardians with opportunities to experience appreciate and respect diversity. This enables all students to belong to an educational community that validates and values their individuality. Our mission statement outlines the school's aim to reflect and affirm diversity so that each member of the community feels equally valued, respected, accepted and supported. Our philosophy recognises the unique nature of each child and aims to ensure that no child is an outsider.

The school has adopted a whole school approach to inclusive education.

Through the promotion of inclusive practices we aim to enable all pupils to:

- be afforded a sense of belonging in a diverse school community;
- be provided with a stimulating environment and allowed to grow and learn at their own individual pace and to reach their potential (within the constraints of large class size);
- develop an appreciation and respect for each person's unique characteristics;
- promote self-knowledge, self-respect and affirmation of their own strengths;

- promote friendship and skills of empathy within the school community;
- nurture in all pupils, feelings of empowerment and the ability to make a positive difference.

The plan for inclusive education aims to assist teachers by:

- sharing of information between class teachers and support teachers and discussion of individual children's educational, social and emotional needs and progress;
- having a sense of shared responsibility for the individual learning targets of the pupils with special needs and allowing for supplementary teaching and team teaching with support teachers;
- providing different ways of perceiving and meeting the challenges of diversity in the context of a whole school approach;
- sharing responsibilities and having a collaborative approach to differentiation of the curriculum;
- promoting positive attitudes to inclusive education;
- sharing information on training and professional development in special needs education.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Role of the Board of Management

- to oversee the development, implementation and review of the school policy on special education needs;
- to ensure that adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for teachers of children with special educational needs;
- to promote professional development in the area of special educational needs;
- to provide secure facility for storage of records.

2.2 Role of Principal Teacher

- to assume overall responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of the school's policy on special educational needs;
- to oversee the implementation of a whole school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with special educational needs so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need;
- to keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals;
- to help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of special needs by providing guidance and advice with regard to teaching methods and materials and by encouraging teachers to avail of relevant in-career development;
- to liaise with external agencies and advise parents/guardians on procedures for availing of specialist services;
- to assist pupils with special educational needs in their transition to second level education;
- to assign and supervise the duties of Special Needs Assistants.

2.3 Role of Class teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class(es), including pupils with SEN.

His/her role is to:

- endeavour to prevent and alleviate learning difficulties by appropriate differentiation and teaching strategies, including using the staged process (DES Circular SP ED 02/05) for those children for whom concerns have arisen;
- collaborate with the support teacher in the development of GPLPs/ IPLPs and IEPs;
- adhere to support services allocated to pupils;
- implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching/resource provision and be involved in developing appropriate targets in the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP);
- maintain contact with Parents/guardians during the identification, screening and referral process and the supplementary teaching process;
- liaise with support team to ensure on-going support is provided for pupils for whom supplementary teaching has been recently reduced or discontinued;
- may assist the Principal in the supervision of the work of SNAs and provide SNAs with a sense of direction through assigning class-related tasks.

2.4 Role of Support Teachers

The role of the support teacher is:

- to assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties;
- to collaborate and consult with principal, class teachers, SNAs, parents/guardians and other professionals with regard to the provision of special education. (A schedule of such meetings is outlined in appendix 5);
- to carry out diagnostic assessments where appropriate;
- to co-ordinate the implementation of whole –school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in the case of children receiving learning support;
- to develop and implement IPLPs/IEPs for pupils, as appropriate, in consultation with class teachers and parents/guardians, SNAs;
- to deliver prevention and early intervention programmes to pupils from junior infants to second class;
- to implement the Forward Together Programme in S.I. and First Class, informed by the results of the M.I.S.T. administered in the second term of S.I.;
- to engage in collaborative teaching, where appropriate;
- to provide appropriate support teaching to pupils with a diagnosis of a low incidence disability, e.g. dyspraxia; ref DES Circular SP ED 02/05, or high incidence, e.g. dyslexia;

- to provide supplementary teaching in English and/or Mathematics to pupils who score at or below the 12th percentile on standardised norm-referenced tests;
- to maintain a Weekly Planning and Progress record for each individual or group of pupils receiving support;
- to monitor and record progress of pupils in achieving the agreed learning targets;
- to contribute to the development of policy on special educational needs at the whole-school level;
- to provide advice to class teachers, when required, in such areas as individual pupil assessment, programme planning and availability of teaching resources, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties.

2.5 Role of the Language Support Teacher

The language support teacher will:

- support the pupil's development of English language proficiency so that he or she can gradually gain access to the curriculum;
- support the pupil's integration into the host culture and promote the skills necessary to socialise with his/her peers;
- work in collaboration with the mainstream class teacher to set relevant and achievable learning targets for each pupil;
- help the pupil to develop appropriate strategies and skills to support future formal education in general;
- meet with parents/guardians and discuss ways in which home-school co-operation can support these targets.

2.6 Role of the Parents/guardians in supporting the work of the school

Parents/guardians can prepare for and support the work of the school by participating with their child in such activities as:

- book sharing / reading stories;
- storytelling;
- paired reading (listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading);
- discussion about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills;
- encouraging the use of correct language and full sentences when communicating with their children;
- counting, measuring and other activities involving number;
- arranging visits to parks, museums, libraries etc, to broaden the range of their child's experiences;
- reading environmental print when on shopping trips, family outings, etc.;
- talking positively about school and school work;
- implementing suggested home-based activities outlined in the pupil's IEP. or IPLP;
- ensuring homework tasks are completed;

- attending parent/teacher meetings and contributing to and supporting their child's learning programme;
- communicating with teachers if any major event occurs in the life of the pupil;
- encouraging their child to share their own interests, culture, etc., as appropriate;
- sharing knowledge of their child e.g. strengths, needs, learning styles, interests, etc., with teachers and SNAs.

2.7 Role of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

The principal is directly responsible for the management of the special needs assistants and for assigning duties. As with special needs teaching resources he/she may, where appropriate, deploy individual SNA resources to support several pupils with special needs. In appropriate circumstances this may involve the deployment of an individual SNA in more than one classroom (DES Circular 24/03).

The SNAs duties are of a non-teaching nature, such as:

- when appointed to a particular pupil, support that pupil's particular needs;
- give general assistance to class teachers, under the direction of the principal;
- work under the direct supervision of principal, class teachers and special education teachers;
- support the class teacher through preparation and tidying up of materials and classroom;
- report to teachers any relevant observations or information regarding the child, e.g. from playtime, social activities, etc;
- assist on out-of-school visits and assist in the supervision of pupils with special educational needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.

3. EXEMPTION FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH

Children may be allowed exemption from the study of Irish in the circumstances outlined in DES Circular 12/96, section 1. a-f. When a parent/guardian applies for an exemption the prescribed procedures in section 4 apply. As part of the procedures in section 4 the school authorities prepare a full report on the student, in consultation with the relevant class/support teacher.

(Appendix 4: copy of school report).

4. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

4.1 Prevention Strategies

In RETNS we strive to prevent or alleviate learning difficulties by implementing appropriate whole-school programmes in English and Mathematics and social programmes where appropriate. The strategies used in our school to prevent learning difficulties include:

- development of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics (school policies) to ensure progression and continuity from class to class;
- ongoing structured observation and assessment of literacy and numeracy skills is carried out in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties;
- provision of additional support in language development and in relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it;
- implementation of parallel reading programmes (e.g. ORT) with parental involvement;
- encouragement of parental involvement in developing children's oral language skills, sharing books with children, and developing their early mathematical skills.

4.2 Early Intervention Strategies

When difficulties arise in the early years whole –school strategies for implementing early intervention are employed..

Early Intervention Programmes may involve:

- intensive small group teaching or one-to-one teaching when deemed necessary;
- placing a strong focus on the development of oral language, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills;
- emphasising the development of phonics and phonological awareness and a range of other word identification skills, e.g. sight word recognition and using contextual cues;
- developing fine and gross motor skills and using fine motor skills in the development of writing skills;
- in mathematics, focussing on language development, the development of mathematical procedures and concepts and providing opportunities for children to experience a broad range of maths equipment for all areas of the school maths programme.

5. IDENTIFICATION, SCREENING AND REFERRAL PROCESS.

From second class onwards the prevention and early intervention strategies will be supplemented by the identification, screening and referral process.

5.1 Preliminary Screening

- open communication between parents/guardians and teachers, and shared responsibility for all the pupils' well being, should lead to an early identification of need;

- the collaborative nature of the school involves the principal, support teachers and SNAs in contributing confidentially any relevant observations or concerns from early morning playtimes, playground behaviour or small group activities to the class teacher;
- the playground behaviour record slips, class behaviour record slips and incident forms will be used to highlight concerns about children who are experiencing social/emotional and behavioural difficulties in the general school setting.

The class teacher utilises the following screening measures:

- teacher observes the pupil formally and informally;
- literacy, numeracy and motor skills are screened through the teacher's notes and observations and through work samples;
- the progress meeting record forms will show evidence of communication of concerns between teachers and parents/guardians;
- pupil record forms filled in by the class teacher at the end of junior infants and senior infants in the areas of social/emotional development, literacy and numeracy and health information are given to the principal, the support teachers and also passed on to the next class teacher;
- stage one of the staged process will be initiated by the principal or class teacher when concerns arise.

5.2 Testing.

- The Middle Infant Screening Test (M.I.S.T) is administered in the fifth term of school. (2nd term of senior infants) by the class teacher assisted by the support teachers.
- The Drumcondra Reading test and Drumcondra Spelling tests are administered in May to all classes from 1st to 5th. The support teachers take responsibility for distributing, collecting and arranging machine scoring of these tests, when appropriate.
- The Drumcondra Maths test is administered in June to all classes from 1st to 5th. The support teachers take responsibility for distributing, collecting and arranging correction of these tests.
- Significant changes (15 percentile points or more) in a child's score in the Drumcondra Maths, Reading and Spelling Tests are highlighted by the class teacher. A significant rise in a child's score is marked using a yellow highlighter and a significant drop using a pink highlighter, indicating the number of percentile points. The class teacher must examine the child's test booklet to determine the source of the change. If mitigating factors apply, such as frequent absenteeism or if the child has been unwell or particularly nervous during the testing process the class teacher should make a note beside the child's score on the class result sheet. Where the significant change is downwards, parents/guardians are informed of this change by the class teacher.
- Parents/guardians are informed of the results of their child's standardised tests at the progress meetings in November. A percentile ranking score is given which allows a parent or guardian to see where their child is placed in relation to other pupils of the same age at that particular time .i.e. A percentile

ranking of 55 percentile states that 55% of pupils of the same age are at the same or below the same level as this child and 45% of pupils have scored better.

- If a pupil (2nd-6th class) scores at or below the 12 percentile in Literacy for the first time, the parents/guardians will be informed early in the term by the class teacher before the child receives learning support.
- In the case of the Drumcondra Maths Test, which is administered at the end of the school year, parents/guardians whose children score at or below the 12 percentile for the first time will be informed by the class teacher as early as possible to facilitate the child receiving learning support at the start of the new term.
- There will be timetable provision made on the support teachers' timetable for the morning of the last working Friday of each month to carry out diagnostic and/or other testing of children who are at stage 2 of referral. The school has a range of diagnostic test materials for use by the support teachers.

5.3 The staged approach to referral.

(It is important to note that while the process is a staged one, every child may not necessarily move through the process in a linear fashion, e.g. a child with significant needs may proceed directly to stage 3).

Stage 1

- Should the class teacher or parent/guardian have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a pupil, the class teacher will then administer screening measures. These may include screening checklists and profiles for children from junior infants to first class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older children and behavioural checklists where appropriate.
- Following screening and profiling the class teacher devises a short, simple plan for extra help within the normal classroom setting and completes the Stage 1 screening form (Appendix 1). Parents/guardians will be involved in implementing aspects of the programme at home, where necessary.
- The support teachers can assist the class teacher by providing formal, informal and observational tools and advice on resources to aid implementation of the plan of learning which is focussed on the relevant area of need in the classroom setting.
- The class teacher will continue to observe, assess and review the plan.
- If, after an appropriate period of time and three reviews of screening and classroom interventions, there is still concern about a child, the class teacher will consult with parents/guardians and the support team about further adaptations to the plan or moving on to stage two.
- Support may be sought from NEPS psychologist, particularly in relation to the implementation of a behaviour plan.

Stage 2

If concern remains after three reviews and interventions by the class teacher and parents/guardians the child will be referred, with parents/ guardians permission, to the support team for diagnostic and/or other testing. The class teacher will give the stage 1 form to the principal. The principal will pass a copy to the support teachers who will carry out the assessments. On completion of the assessments a recommendation will be made. If the assessments show that the child meets the criteria for support teaching under DES guidelines, this will be arranged. Parents/guardians, class teacher and support teacher are involved in drawing up the learning programme and its implementation.

In RETNS supplementary teaching by the support teachers is prioritised as follows:

- (a) Pupils from 2nd to 6th class at or below the 12th percentile in literacy
- (b) Early intervention for literacy, J. I. to 2nd class
- (c) Pupils from 2nd to 6th class at or below the 12th percentile in numeracy
- (d) Early intervention in numeracy, J. I. to 2nd class
- (e) Pupils at the 12th to the 20th percentile in literacy and numeracy in 3rd to 5th class where resources allow.
- (f) Where a pupil needing support could benefit from a programme set up for a resource child they may join the resource child's group programme where this benefits both pupils. This support could be based on curriculum or social and emotional needs.

Pupils with the highest level of need will have the highest level of support.

Stage 3

If significant concerns exist after one instructional term in learning support the pupil may be moved on to Stage 3 of the process.

- The support teachers will reassess the pupil at this stage.
- The school may request an assessment of need from a relevant specialist professional, in consultation with the pupil's parents/guardians. The Principal co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies e.g. the *National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)*. In a situation where the school has been allocated an assessment or assessments under the NEPS scheme, the assessment(s) will be allocated to those children with the greatest need. This will be decided by the Principal, in consultation with the relevant teaching staff and NEPS psychologist.
- The class teacher fills in the referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- A parent/guardian may choose to have a child assessed privately.
- Where children enter the school with a previous assessment the principal will meet with the parents/guardians and relevant external specialist personnel to discuss the pupil's strengths and needs prior to entry to the school or during the first term of entry.

- Following referral an appropriate assessment will be conducted, e.g. psychological assessment, speech and language assessment, etc.
- Where a diagnosis of a disability is made resources are granted accordingly. A child with a diagnosis of a high incidence disability, e.g. dyslexia, will be given support either in the classroom or from the support team. A child with a diagnosis of a low incidence disability, e.g. ASD, will be given support from the support team, according to DES Special Education Circular 02/05.
- In consultation with the parents/ guardians, and relevant specialists, the support teacher and class teacher will draw up a specific learning plan in the IEP/ IPLP format.
- Necessary resources are identified and sourced to meet the needs of the pupil. The principal will liaise with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser) in providing specific resources and services for a pupil.
- The school will review these specific learning plans yearly, unless it is necessary to do so more often for specific pupils.
- Referral for specialist review will occur where it is deemed necessary to draw up a more appropriate IEP or IPLP specific to a child's changing needs.

6. INDIVIDUALISED PLANNING

6.1 Individual Profile and Learning Programme /Group Profile and Learning Programmes (IPLP/GPLP)

The Individual Profile and Learning Programme will contain:

- details from the class teacher;
- assessment results (before and after supplementary teaching);
- summary of other information;
- strengths and Needs;
- priority Learning Needs;
- learning Targets for a particular period;
- class based learning activities;
- learning support activities;
- home support activities;
- supplementary support activities e.g. support from SNA, ICT, etc.;
- external support services where applicable.

The IPLP should be drawn up in consultation with the pupil's class teacher and parents/guardians and also, where appropriate, with the pupil. Generally the IPLP's should be reviewed yearly. This is dependant on the allocation of learning support to the school each year and also on the need for review of some individual programmes. GPLPs (Group Profile and Learning Programmes) will be used in a group teaching setting, where appropriate to particular pupils' needs.

6.2 Short term plans

Weekly / daily plans are kept with specific learning targets prioritised and attainments recorded for individuals and groups.

6.3 Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

The Individual Education Plans are a result of a consultative, collaborative process and will contain the following elements:

- information from parents/guardians, class teachers, support teachers, SNAs, pupils themselves and all other personnel involved with the pupil;
- formal and informal assessment of the pupil;
- recommendations;
- pupil's strengths/needs;
- priority learning needs;
- specific learning targets;
- teaching strategies/materials/resources;
- assistive technology/ technology plan where appropriate;
- differentiation of the curriculum is discussed with class teachers and this is included in the class teacher's long term and short term planning.

The IEP meetings are held early in Term 1. These are attended by the class teacher, support teacher, parents/guardians, external professionals (and the pupil, depending on age and maturity).

The support teachers meet with all parents/guardians during the November Progress Meetings.

Prior to I.E.P. meetings class teachers and parents/guardians are requested to complete a brief profile of their child's strengths, needs and priority learning needs and to bring this profile to the meeting. The class teacher, support teacher (and SNA where applicable) meet before the IEP meeting to discuss and prioritise the child's learning needs.

6.4 Record Keeping

Records are kept of the following:

- IEPs IPLP s and GPLPs;
- screening, standardised, diagnostic tests;
- psychological reports and assessments from external professionals;
- individual pupil files, which may include letters to/from parents and accident or incident forms;
- end of year whole-school special needs profile;
- exemptions from Irish.

7. ORGANISATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING

7.1 Timetabling

- cooperation and flexibility are essential in drawing up timetables and also in accommodating changes in timetables throughout the school year;
- the support teachers draw up the timetable (some teaching models e.g. team, alternate, station and parallel may restrict the support team's flexibility in regard to time-tabling);
- children who need support during social play on a Friday morning receive this in the classroom;
- where a child is receiving one to one instruction, has an exemption from Irish and is not participating in Irish class, the support teachers should endeavour to timetable around this.

7.2 Approaches to support teaching

The support teachers will adapt their teaching approaches and strategies to meet the individual needs of the pupils in their caseload. Examples of such approaches are outlined in Appendix 2.

7.3 Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL)

- Pupils for whom English is an additional language are placed in an age appropriate class.
- Every effort is made to help the pupil and Parents/guardians to settle in to the school environment.
- Where appropriate, other Parents/guardians or pupils may act as translators or interpreters for the pupils and their family initially. If necessary the B.O.M will consider funding for translation of important school correspondence e.g. of a legal nature.
- In general where a pupil may qualify for exemption from Irish , as per Circular 12/96 , the school will complete the necessary documentation to obtain this exemption..
- The school employs a teacher for pupils for whom English is an additional language when DES criteria are met and where grant assistance is available to the school.
- This teacher provides support on an individual or group basis.
- These pupils may also receive support under the General Allocation Model when criteria are met.

7.4 Provision for Exceptionally able pupils

- To date the Dept of Ed and Science have provided no extra resources for students who are exceptionally able.
- The exceptionally able pupils' learning is supported in the classroom by differentiating the curriculum (see appendix 3)
- If it is possible to group exceptionally able children with a resource child for specific project work the school actively engages in this process if it is of benefit to the SEN pupil.(e.g. class project work , IT skills group, social skills groups).

7.5 Continuing/ discontinuing support teaching,

- A pupil will continue to receive support from the support team for as long as he/she meets the school's criteria as outlined in Section 5.3 of this policy;
- A pupil with a high incidence disability whose needs may be more appropriately met alongside their peers in the classroom may no longer receive support from the support team if deemed appropriate, following consultation with the class teacher and parents/guardians e.g. a child with a diagnosis of dyslexia who scores firmly in the average to above average in standardised tests.

8. MONITORING PROGRESS

RETNS has whole-school systems in place for monitoring progress of all aspects of special education support.

8.1 Whole-school approaches to monitoring the implementation of the whole school plan for special education.

RETNS considers regular consultation and liaison among class teachers and support staff to be essential to the implementation of the whole-school plan for special needs. Support personnel endeavour to make the best use of informal time to monitor the implementation of the plan, e.g. break-times, play times, in the mornings and after school to liaise with class teachers and SNAs. Formal meetings also occur between members of the support team, between support team and class teachers and SNAs and between support team and principal. These meetings assist in the monitoring of the whole-school plan by reviewing and updating the following:

- the school's prevention and early intervention programmes;
- the school's screening programme for the selection of pupils for diagnostic assessment;
- the various procedures that necessitate the involvement of the class teacher and the parents/guardians, for example, diagnostic assessment;
- appropriate criteria for continuing/reducing support levels for pupils at the end of a term of supplementary teaching;
- progress of pupils in receipt of support, with reference to the learning targets in their IPLPs/IEPs;
- involvement of class teachers and parents/guardians in implementing suggested activities in pupils' learning programmes;
- alignment of pupils' class and supplementary teaching programmes;
- referral of pupils for additional assessment and support;
- time-tabling of pupils for support teaching;
- adequacy of resources for support teaching;
- sharing of information and knowledge about a pupil;

- staff meetings and ISM (In School Management) meetings– special needs issues are regularly on the agenda;
- mentoring and supporting new teachers and support staff;
- feedback from parent/guardians at meetings.

8.2 Whole school procedures for monitoring the progress of individual pupils in receipt of support

There is ongoing monitoring of each pupil’s progress in relation to the attainment of targets using the *Weekly Planning and Progress Record*, so that class teaching and supplementary teaching continue to be responsive to the pupil’s needs at all times. This is reflected in the up-dating/adapting of GPLPs/IPLPs/IEPs at the end of the first instructional term. A full review may take place at the end of the first instructional term if the need arises.

A more detailed review of the pupil’s progress takes place annually with reference to his/her IPLP or IEP. This review details progress to date and culminates in a decision on the level and type of support that the pupil will need in the future, the form that that support should take, and, where appropriate, a revision of the learning targets and activities in the child’s IPLP, IEP or GPLP. This may also encompass results of standardised testing, where appropriate.

9. LIAISING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The ethos of our school supports partnership with parents/guardians in all aspects of school life. We adhere to principles of:

- (a) mutual respect and support for each other
 - (b) shared expertise
 - (c) consultative collaboration
 - (d) effective two way communication.
- Teachers liaise informally with parents/guardians at school opening and closing times.
 - Appointments for meetings between teachers and parents/guardians may be made at any time during the school year through the secretary’s office.
 - Individual progress meetings are held in the first term, and parents, guardians meet with both class teachers and support teachers.
 - Parents/guardians are consulted at each stage of the staged process, prior to participating in the “Forward Together” programme, prior to administering tests where parental permission is required. Parents/guardians or support teacher may require a meeting where the child’s needs have changed.
 - Parents/guardians are directly involved with the support team in drawing up the IPLP’s and IEPs.

10. LINKS WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES

- The principal, in consultation with deputy principal, parents/guardians support teacher and class teacher will refer all pupils who have gone through the staged process as outlined in this policy to external professionals or agencies.
- The principal and/or class teachers and support teachers will liaise with professionals and agencies that have provided reports on pupils, and facilitate multi-disciplinary teams if appropriate.
- The support teacher responsible for a particular child will co-ordinate the visiting teacher service for that child, e.g. a child with visual impairment, where appropriate, in consultation with the principal.

11. HANDING OVER OF RECORDS TO SECOND LEVEL SCHOOLS.

During sixth class all parents/guardians receive a letter from the principal requesting permission for the school to forward to second level schools relevant information regarding their child. Provided permission is received the principal communicates information requested to the relevant secondary school (appendix 5).

12. MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN FROM SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS.

Where appropriate the school may be in a position to facilitate visits to a mainstream classroom by a child from a special school setting, where this is part of the child's IEP formulated in that school. This arrangement will be decided on an individual basis, taking into consideration the child's needs and the school's capacity to meet these needs. The arrangement will adhere to any relevant DES guidelines.

13. RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy was ratified by the BOM of RETNS on December 15th 2009

The policy will be reviewed in line with any changes and developments in special needs provision.

Stage 1 Screening Form

Child's Name _____ D.O.B _____

Class/year _____ Class teacher _____

Reason for screening

literacy

numeracy

motor

behaviour

other (please specify)

Teacher's class plan to address above concerns in classroom setting

Plan for parental involvement/support

Review dates (1/2 termly, termly, etc.)

Date: _____ parent/guardian involvement: yes no

Outcome/ongoing plan:

Second review

Date:	parent/guardian involvement:	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome/ongoing plan:			

Third review

Date:	parent/guardian involvement:	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome/ongoing plan:			

Any further action to be taken

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WHEN COMPLETED THIS FORM MUST BE PHOTOCOPIED AND A COPY KEPT IN THE CHILD'S CLASS FILE.. THE ORIGINAL MUST BE GIVEN TO THE PRINCIPAL FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

Signed _____ Dated _____

Appendix 2

- Withdrawing pupils on an individual/group basis to the support teacher's room for one to one teaching.
- Early intervention work in the junior classes.
- Managing the "Forward Together" programme from the MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) with the senior infant Teacher.
- One teaches and one assists or supports: Both teachers are present in the classroom, one teacher leads the instructional activity while the other teacher observes, checks students' understanding, supports the work of the SEN pupils and manages behaviour. The roles of the teachers can be interchanged here in order for the class teacher to work closely with the SEN children in a classroom setting also.
- Strategic Learning in the classroom. The support teacher may schedule time to collaborate with a class teacher in teaching a specific learning strategy in their classroom that would meet the needs of the SEN pupils but also the other pupils. Examples of strategies that could be used would be Social Skills Training activities, Circle time, Study Skills or Visualising and Verbalising (Nancy Bell).
- Class Teaching. The support teacher may on occasion or regularly teach a particular subject area to a whole class and enable the class teacher to withdraw an SEN pupil or a group and provide supplementary teaching to them.
- Alternative teaching: The school may target a specific subject area and may break up classes into groups and have two or more teachers working intensively on the particular area of need. e.g. during Maths class two support teachers work with the class teacher. One teacher takes the larger group of pupils while the other teachers provide the curriculum to small groups at a pace appropriate to their varying needs.
- Station teaching: Two teachers or more divide the content to be taught to the class between them. Each teacher delivers a portion of the lesson to a section of the class group and then students rotate among the teachers.
- Parallel teaching: This involves two teachers teaching two groups the same content simultaneously.
- Team teaching: Both teachers jointly plan the lesson content and both are equally involved in the instruction of the class. They take turns providing information, leading activities and discussions and demonstrating the concepts being taught.

Appendix 3

Differentiation for exceptionally able children

- (a) **Modifying the content of the curriculum.** Students are given the opportunity to study subjects in greater depth. They may also explore more abstract ideas and themes through group work or individual project work. They may also work on more advanced material in any subject.
- (b) **Modifying the process.** Pupils are encouraged to use research skills. Different questions and thinking skills are used for these pupils. They are provided with opportunities to investigate more in the curriculum area through project work.
- (c) **Modifying the product.** The pupils are encouraged to adjust an activity and are given the opportunity to present it in many forms. They are provided with choice and variety in presenting what they have learned.
- (d) **Modifying the learning environment.** Within the limitations of small classrooms and large class sizes the principal and class teachers actively encourage independence and child centeredness and high mobility around the classroom. The exceptionally able children are doing something that is different to the “normal “class curriculum. The school agrees with the aim for HOTS (higher order thinking skills) rather than MOTS (more of the same).

RE: 6th class Entry to Secondary Schools for September 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians,

During this year I will receive requests from a number of secondary schools regarding your children starting in secondary schools in September 2010
Secondary Schools make a number of requests.

Some examples are:

Does the student have a psychological report?

Is the student receiving resource hours?

Is the student receiving learning support?

If yes, in what areas are they receiving support?

Has the student any additional needs in the area of English as an additional language [EAL]

Has the student an Irish exemption?

Requests for students test results in Literacy and Mathematics

This list is not fully comprehensive but covers most of the requests I have received.

Please give your consent to give information to your child's 2nd level school.

I give consent for information to be given to the second level school regarding my child _____ child's name

Parents/Guardians signature _____

I do not give consent for information to be given to the second level school regarding my child _____ child's name

Parents/Guardians signature _____

Parents/Guardians may request a copy of any information which goes to their child's second level school.

Sinéad Watson
Principal

Schedule of Meetings

September

1. Class teacher and support teacher.
2. IEP meeting with parents/guardians, class teacher, support teacher.
3. Class teacher, previous SNA (where applicable), current SNA (where applicable) and support teacher.
4. For General Allocation Children, where requested by either parents/guardians or teacher

November

Progress Meetings (Refer to school policy)

Second Term of Senior Infants

Parents/guardians of pupils recommended for Forward Together following the MIST with class teacher and /or support teacher.

On completion of Forward Together Programme parents/guardians and class teacher and /or support teacher.

Where there is a requirement to review/discuss policies and practices the Support Team meet on the last working Friday of the month.

Close contact is maintained during the school year with parents/guardians of children receiving support.

Meetings are held throughout the year when requested by either parents/guardians, class teacher, support teacher and Principal.

Checklist for parents/guardians of children with special needs who are transferring to post-primary school

(Some of these questions may be relevant to your child's needs when transferring to secondary school)

- How many special needs teachers are in the school?
- Is there much SNA provision in the school?
- What experience does the school have of supporting children with(your child's needs)?
- Is special needs provision by means of withdrawal or in-class support or a combination of both?
- Is the Junior Certificate School's Programme on offer?
- What is the availability for all students of a variety of subjects, including subjects with a practical emphasis?
- Is there a range of "taster" subjects offered as part of first year?
- Will the pupils be streamed? Will there be mixed ability grouping in the first year?
- Is there a system of pastoral care in the school? Is there a buddy system in operation? Is there a clear and effective anti-bullying policy in the school?
- What is the average class size?
- What accommodations (e.g. exam accommodations) are available for children with special needs?
- Is there information sharing between support staff and other staff e.g. regarding how homework can be supported?
- Are there open days, parents' evenings, induction events for pupils and their parents/guardians
- Is there a specific orientation day for children with special educational needs before the school opening in September?

Reference www.sess.ie