



Polasaí Tacaíocht do pháistí le riachtanais speisialta/

Support Policy for Children with Special Education Needs

<u>Staff Consultation:</u>	<u>Márta 2018</u>
<u>Parent Consultation:</u>	<u>Aibreán 2018</u>
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Support Policy for Pupils with Special Education Needs.

Preamble

Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg is a co-educational school with mainstream classes and also classes for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. We operate under the ethos of Educate Together and we cater for children from all social, cultural, religious and non-religious backgrounds. We aim to provide an education that fosters the development of children's talents, abilities and personalities. We support children in developing attitudes which will enable them to become open-minded, creative, respectful, responsible and caring members of society.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers and parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

This policy takes account of Circular 0013/2017: Special Education Teaching allocation, the Special Education Needs: A Continuum of Support Guidelines for Teachers, and the Guidelines on the Individual Education Plan Process (NCSE 2006).

The following categories of pupils will receive supplementary teaching

- Pupils whose achievement is at or below the 10th percentile on standardised tests in English or Mathematics;
- Pupils with learning difficulties, pupils with social or emotional needs as well as needs associated with physical development, sensory development, language and communication difficulties and attention control difficulties associated with identified conditions

The school currently has the following SEN team to support the provision of education for children with Special Education Needs:

- 3 Special Education Teacher posts and 1 shared Special Education Teacher post..
- Four Special needs assistant working in a mainstream and
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Scope

This policy applies to mainstream classes.

Relationship to the ethos of the school

Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg aims to provide a child-centered education for all of our pupils which will allow each child the opportunity to develop his/her abilities to their full potential. Parents will be actively involved in the provision of this education.

Abbreviations

SEN: Special educational needs

SENO: Special educational needs organizer

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorder

DES: Department of Education and Skills

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service

IEP: Individual Education Plan

NARA: Neal analysis of reading ability

NRIT: Non-reading intelligence test

MIST: Middle Infant screening test

BIAP: Belfield Infant Assessment Profile

NCCA: National Council for Curriculum Assessment

NCSE: National Council for Special Education

SDP: School Development Planning

SESS: Special Education Support Services

SNA: Special Needs Assistant.

SP: Support Teacher

Guiding Principles:

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

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.

Inclusion:

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document, aims to enable children with special educational needs, traveller children and children whose first language is not English, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

Three principles for inclusion

Setting Suitable Learning Challenges

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. In order to do this, Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg will use the 'Continuum of Support Process' as outlined in Table 1 below to identify educational needs. Identification of educational needs is central to setting suitable learning challenges for our SEN pupils. Using the continuum of support framework, our school will 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.

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

Classroom Support	The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by: • 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 A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
School Support	At this level a support plan is devised and informed by: • 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 A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition. Teachers will fine tune programmes and methods and will modify and adapt interventions depending on the pupils response and rate of progress. A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support Plus	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 and support services (as appropriate) and may include: • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc With parental consent, the class teacher may request involvement of appropriate external professionals eg, Educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists. Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. Educational psychologists ie NEPS, work in collaboration with teachers and parents in clarifying problems, through consultation and further joint assessment. They collaborate with teachers in planning and monitoring interventions which take account of the pupils strengths and address identified needs. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.
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Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs

We 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. In planning our support, the 'Planning Template' outlining the 6 point action plan below will be utilised.

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

Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs	Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).
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	Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.
Action 2: Setting targets	Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the continuum of support.
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.
Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.
Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources	Cross-reference the needs of pupils at school support and school support plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place. 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.
Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress	Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored: • 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.

Diagnostic Assessment

Following interpretation of the standardised tests, pupils may be selected for diagnostic assessment. This involves consultation between the class teacher and support teacher. From parents, written consent is sought before administration of diagnostic tests. Tests administered may include some of the following: (this is not an exhaustive list)

Diagnostic Assessment Resources
Quest
Aston Index – incorporating Schonell Reading and Spelling
Rain Sentence Reading Test
MIST-middle infant screening test
Jackson Phonic test
Diagnostic Spelling Test
NRIT – non reading intelligence test
Dolch Sight Vocabulary 220 words
100 most frequently used words in reading
100 most frequently used words in spelling
Dyslexia Screening Test
York Assessment for reading and Comprehension
Basic Phonics Skills Tests (BPST-11)
MALT: Mathematics Assessment for Learning and Teaching
Schonell Reading test
Neal analysis of Reading Ability

The following areas of Literacy and Numeracy may also be tested informally and formally:

Emergent Literacy Stage

1. Print awareness
2. Print conventions.
3. Phonemic awareness and ability to rhyme word
4. Letter identification
5. Knowledge of letter sounds
6. Word recognition
7. Visual discrimination
8. Word identification skills
9. Spelling
10. Writing
11. Auditory Skills – sequencing and discrimination

Beyond Early Literacy Stage

1. Reading fluency
2. Sentence and passage comprehension
3. Word recognition
4. Vocabulary
5. Word identification skills
6. Miscue analysis
7. Spelling
8. Oral language proficiency i.e. listening skills, comprehension, and expressive language
9. Motivation to learn
10. Social adjustment

Mathematics

Diagnostic Assessment of Mathematics will include some or all of the following depending on the pupil's individual needs:

- Conservation of number
- Understanding of math's concepts
- Number sense
- Understanding and ability to use the language of math's
- Computation skills
- Ability to use number in realistic situations
- Problem solving strategies
- Recall of number facts
- Mathematical reasoning skills

- Review and assessment dates are documented.

Communication

Liaising with Parents/Guardians.

Consultation with parents prior to diagnostic assessment is standard practice and further discussion regarding the results is necessary to ascertain the areas needing attention and implementation of support plans and Individual Education Plans.. Guidance can also be given prior to testing to parents/guardians by the support teacher. This may include information/discussion sessions on such topics as:

1. The purpose and procedures of the school support teaching service.
2. Paired reading programme.
3. Developing children's oral reading language.
4. Motivating children to read more.
5. Creating a home environment in which literacy can thrive.
6. Helping children with homework.
7. Selecting books that interest children.
8. Developing children's reasoning and problem solving abilities.
9. Developing children's mathematical knowledge.

Parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if any difficulties arise during an instructional term and to attend any meetings at the end of an instructional term to review their children's progress in achieving learning targets.

If it is decided that support teaching is to continue parents are invited to discuss revised learning targets and activities.

Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Children

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning. If we do not address them through special arrangements. Our SEN policy envisages a whole school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, the Principal, class teacher, special education teacher and the parents and pupils.

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BoM, principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

Board of Management

The BoM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special educational needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel. The BoM:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on support for children with extra needs
- Provides adequate class accommodation and teaching resources
- Provides a secure facility for storage of records.

Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. He/She will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with the SEN co-ordinator to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area

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 our NEPS psychologist
- Liaises with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children with SEN
- Liaises with Principal and 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

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. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. All mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding Information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

Standardised Testing

From Junior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.

Class	May Testing
Junior Infants	BIAP: Belfield Infant Assessment Profiles.
Senior Infants	Drumcondra Tests of Early Literacy screening. Drumcondra Tests of Early Numeracy Screening.
First Class	Drumcondra Maths, English (1st)
Second Class	Drumcondra Maths, English(2nd)
Third Class	Drumcondra Maths, English(3rd)
Fourth Class	Drumcondra Maths, English(4th)
Fifth Class	Drumcondra Maths, English(5th)
Sixth Class	Drumcondra Maths, English (6 th).

The Role of the Special Education Teacher

Special education teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

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

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.

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

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The Parents/Guardians of the pupils of Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

Pupil Input

It is important for the students to have an input into their own learning plan and its review. By doing so they can:

- become more independent as learners;
- become aware of different learning styles;
- become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs;
- enjoy success and evaluate their progress;
- develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught.

Enrolment

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Ed. For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

Special Classes for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg has as part of its community a special unit for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The unit consists of two classes which caters for six children each. Each class has one class teacher and two Special Needs Assistants. The unit has a Multi-Sensory Room, a shared area and Playground. The well-equipped playground area may be accessed a number of times daily. Pupils will integrate into the mainstream class play areas under the supervision of a Special Needs Assistant.

Our class for younger pupils is called Caterpillars and our class for older pupils is called Butterflies.

The unit aims to offer an Autism specific learning environment within a mainstream school. This type of educational setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate.

The classrooms are physically structured in accordance with the TEACCH Model, with specific areas for individual learning, group work and lunch. The rooms are equipped with a variety of equipment to develop fine and gross motor skills, aid sensory processing and provide exercises for stimulation and preparation for learning.

The multi-sensory room consists of fibre-optic lights, bubble tube, projector, mirrors, a variety of sensory equipment and mood music. This room may be used to stimulate a child or help a child to self-regulate..

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- ; • Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the policy in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children
- Monitor the implementation of the policy on an ongoing basis
- Keep relevant teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed in relation to referrals within the ASD setting
- Support teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of ASD
- Being a member of the admissions team
- Upholding the Code of Behaviour of the school, where appropriate

- Ensure that staff have received the appropriate training in conjunction with the Safeguarding Staff Safeguarding Children Policy.

ASD class teacher

- Being the main point of contact for the child's parents/guardians.
- Initiate, update and review a pupil support file for each student.
- Involving parents in the educational process, eg. Individual Education Plans (IEPS), Home-School Communication Diaries, etc.
- Preparing a new pupil's IEP in the first term of the school year in consultation with parents, and in liaison with other staff working with the child.
- Initiating a review of that IEP each term and organising venue, date and time to consult with parents, mainstream class teacher and SNAs
- Planning and implementing educational provision for children enrolled in the multiclass. IEPs being used as long-term planning and fortnightly plans for short-term planning to enable progression over time
- Co-ordinating the supporting work of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) on an ongoing basis
- Working with the mainstream class teacher to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate
- Working with the mainstream class teacher to identify and implement accommodations that the child with ASD may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate
- Upholding the Code of Behaviour of the school, where appropriate
- Ensure that all staff have received the appropriate training in conjunction with the Safeguarding Staff Safeguarding Children Policy

Mainstream class teacher

- Working with the multi-class teacher to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate
- Working with the ASD teacher and SNAs to implement accommodations that the child with ASD may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate
- Providing input, where appropriate, during the review stages of the IEPs and attending IEP review meetings, where possible The roles and responsibilities of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) include;
- Assisting with the care/safety/supervision needs of the children – in the classrooms and around the school, on the playground and on school trips

- Assisting with behavioural management programmes
- Guiding the child through tasks and activities designed by the ASD teacher or the mainstream class teacher
- Data collection/reporting on progress as determined by the ASD teacher or Principal
- Providing special assistance to children as necessary
- Preparing materials/resources for the children, under the guidance of the ASD teacher or the mainstream class teacher
- Providing input, where appropriate, during the review stages of the IEPs and attending IEP review meetings, where possible

Integration and Inclusion

Integration with typically developing peers in inclusive mainstream classroom environments, in so far as possible, is the school's aim. The nature of all integration shall be determined by the ASD class teacher following reviews at appropriate intervals and in consultation with the parents, mainstream class teacher, Principal and SNAs.

"Partial Integration" will take the form of contact during specific situations or curricular areas, where particular skills and interests and/or learning can be advanced.

"Increasing Integration" will be put in place for children who are successful in the integrated setting. Success criteria will be based on the level of meaningful learning and functioning within the setting.

"Reverse Integration" will be put in place for children where integration in the integrated setting is not appropriate. It can be used as a stepping stone to and/or in conjunction with Partial Integration. The focus of "Reverse Integration" will be on social and play skills.

The minimum level of integration and inclusion for all pupils, where appropriate, will include some lunch times, some group activities and some playground breaks.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The children will access a curriculum based on the Primary School Curriculum (1999) that is matched to their needs and capabilities, through carefully planned IEPs and through the use of differentiation strategies. Subject areas include; English, Maths, Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Music, Visual Arts, Drama, Physical Education and Ethical Education. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessments Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities will be used to augment the implementation of the curriculum.

Children who have a recommendation of education in an ASD class setting do not necessarily qualify for an exemption from Gaeltige. An exemption must be recommended by a psychologist or a speech & language therapist. This exemption must be applied for through the principal and NEPs. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their child has the appropriate exemption, if necessary.

An eclectic approach to teaching shall be used within the ASD classes, that is, a range of approaches (including those used in the school's mainstream classes) shall be employed, based on the individual needs of the children.

The main approaches are as follows, but are not limited to; play, language through play, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication – Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Intensive Interaction & Relationship Development, Floortime, Lámh, Language Through Colour and Social Stories.

The assessment tools in use in the multi-classes are, but are not limited to; Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement Programme (VB-MAPP), Psychoeducational Profile – Third Edition (PEP-3), Neale Analysis of Reading Ability II (NARA II) and The Fine Motor Olympics Checklist.

The implementation of the primary school curriculum will be enhanced through a programme of trips to local places, designed to help further prepare the children for successful living in our community (playground visits, coffee shop, shopping tasks, post office, swimming, etc.). Typically developing peers may also participate in elements of this programme.

The school may run a July Education Programme

This programme will be funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The principal and teachers involved in the delivery of the programme

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The BOM will support the accessing of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by staff. Relevant specialist training is accessed via the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and relevant personnel on staff of Maynooth Educate Together NS.

A list of other courses available from the SESS are displayed on the SESS website, <http://www.sess.ie/professional-development/calendar/asd>

The Role of Outside Services

Support from outside services such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), etc., is available to the children and parents of the ASD classes. However, due to a lack of resources and long waiting lists these resources are extremely limited.

No HSE therapies, such as Occupational Therapy or Speech & Language Therapy are provided at the school. However, where a child has access to such supports in a local clinic, health centre or in a private capacity, those professionals will liaise with the ASD teachers and/or visit the school from time to time.

Equipment and Resources The children in the ASD classes will have access to equipment and resources which are recommended in their psychological reports, occupational therapy reports and speech & language therapy reports, where possible. When a recommendation is made for a child for a specific piece of equipment such as a sit and lean cushion, a slant board, etc. the parents of the child may be requested to pay for the equipment and as such it is the property of the child. Resources such as therapy, therapabands, fine motor equipment and gross motor equipment will be, where possible, provided by the school. Children in the ASD-classes will have access the Sensory Room when needed. Resources and Assessment Kits, and Board Maker CD-ROM, will remain in the multi-class classrooms and can be loaned to resource teachers and mainstream teachers, where needed

Resources

Maynooth Educate Together NS is a well-resourced school, which constantly monitors and updates its resources. I.T. provision is good and is updated regularly.

Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

The teacher puts the classroom and the school within the wider context to the pupils lives. The complex physiological, social and emotional needs children bring to school are considered in addition to their learning needs within school.

The following factors are considered:

- Environment/Physical Conditions
- Social factors/Relationships
- Teaching and Learning: Methods, Materials and Procedures
- Classroom Activity
- Rules/Rewards/Consequences
- School Environment.

(Neps Educational Psychological Services: Continuum of Support Resource Pack)

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties, as far as possible, the following **Whole School strategies are being implemented:**

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development e.g. phonological awareness;
- The development and implementation of an agreed whole school approach to the Maths programme e.g. Maths language;
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents of incoming Junior Infants;
- Implementation of whole-school parent involvement programmes that focus on developing childrens oral language skills, sharing books with children and developing their early Mathematical skills
- Whole school promotion of Reading for Pleasure Record in journals, book review
- Genre Writing whole school programme
- Implementation of a paired reading programmes.
- Guided Reading
- Print rich environment ,
- Shared/paired reading ,
- Story time, Library time, DEAR time, Book Week, Book Fair, Reading buddies, Word games, Class library, visiting authors,
- Write a Book Project for children in 4th class
- Access to Literacy apps on school ipads and at home

- Ongoing observation and assessment of language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties
- Formal and informal Parent/Teacher meetings.
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in provision of additional support; and
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by Class Teacher.
- Implementation of social skills programmes
- Implementation of NEPS programmes: Fun Friends and Friends for Life.

Early Intervention Programme

Prevention Programme for Senior Infants
Phonemic awareness
Letter recognition
Sequencing of alphabet / days of the week
Sight vocabulary
Supporting class reading
Handwriting skills
7 aspects oral language development through use of Big Books
Listening, naming, categorizing, describing, denoting position, sequencing, reasoning and planning, retelling a story
Other areas as recommended by class teacher depending on individual needs of particular group.

- Junior Infant pupils are screened using teacher observation;
- information is elicited from enrolment forms which may indicate difficulties at a later stage eg slow to reach recognised milestones, language acquisition and development, attending speech therapy prior to starting school

Early Intervention

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 M.I.S.T. (Middle Infants Screening Test) 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 may be selected to participate in the Forward Together Programme. If selected, 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 Support 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.

Developing Listening Skills:

Promoting a classroom environment where children listen to others, do not interrupt the speaker and wait their turn; Circle time, Listening games/activities; Listening Programmes; Listening to music.

Observation and/or assessment:

Observation: Methods in use- personal checklists, record sheet for each child, Shared observation (2nd opinion), listening to reading, General correction of homework.

Recording observation-Checklists, Personal records, reading records, paired reading, Teachers own observation.

Share concerns with: - Last year's/ next year's teacher, similar level teacher, parents, L/S teacher, SEN co-ordinator

Stages of Assessment and Provision

Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a class teacher, or home school liaison teacher, identifies a child with SEN the class teacher consults with the SEN coordinator and provides interventions that are ADDITIONAL TO or DIFFERENT FROM those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the class teacher. However, as most of our support is in-class the stages are less defined than in situations where learning support is delivered by withdrawal.

Record of Differentiated Support in class

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				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support
School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	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

The class teacher completes a Stage One form and monitors the Record of Differentiated Support for half a term. If this strategy does not work then the teacher will continue to the next stage, **School Action**.

Teachers inform Parents that their child's needs would be better served in a small group with a support teacher. Parents will need to sign their consent.

Stage Two

In cases where the Record of Differentiated Support indicates that progress has not been made, or if the results of tests (M.I.S.T., Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, Sigma T, Belfield Infant Assessment Programme) and teacher observation indicate this to be the case, intervention in the form of a support teacher will be accessed. Again, class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents. The action taken will be as follows:

- The class teacher and support teacher will differentiate the curriculum in specific areas with achievable goals to be implemented by the class teacher and support teacher.
- If there are others in the class with similar difficulties in one or more of the specific areas, then a group educational plan will be implemented.
- These programmes will be reviewed and updated every term.
- While every effort will be made to allow the SEN group/individual to remain included in class, there may be a need to work part of the programme in a SEN room with the support teacher or class teacher. This withdrawal will be time limited and for specific purposes only (e.g. Reading recovery.)
- Where progress is such that the child is no longer giving cause for concern, the child will revert to the usual differentiated curriculum available to all children.

Stage Three

The support or class teacher will perform diagnostic tests on these children (at School Action) usually at the beginning and end of the school year. These tests may include the Neale Analysis Reading Test, Aston Index Spelling and Word recognition test, Non Reading Intelligence test etc.

When it has been identified that a child is still struggling and performing below the tenth percentile despite School Action the class teacher with the support teacher and SEN coordinators, in consultation with the child's parents, may consider the following actions:

1. A psychological assessment will be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004)
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 goals, which the child is to achieve over a period of half a year.

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

The management of the IEP strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher, support teacher and the SEN coordinator.

REVIEW of IEPs

The SEN coordinator will ensure that the review is conducted at the end of three months (October, February, and May). The class teacher consults with the support teacher, the child (and SNA if appointed). They agree on the expected outcomes of the IEP. A draft copy is formulated and sent home to the child's parents. The parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss or make recommendations to the draft review if they so wish. Again, outside agencies may play a part in formulating the final copy. The review will be recorded on the IEP Review form. (Attached, Appendix 5).

Where progress is unsatisfactory it may be decided that the child continues to receive additional supports. Where progress is satisfactory, and where the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision will be made to revert to School Action.

The review in May will be to formulate an IEP, which will be part of the plan for the next teacher in September. It will be carried out as outlined above.

IEPs for children moving to 2nd level will be referred to at the consultation meetings with the 2nd level representative.

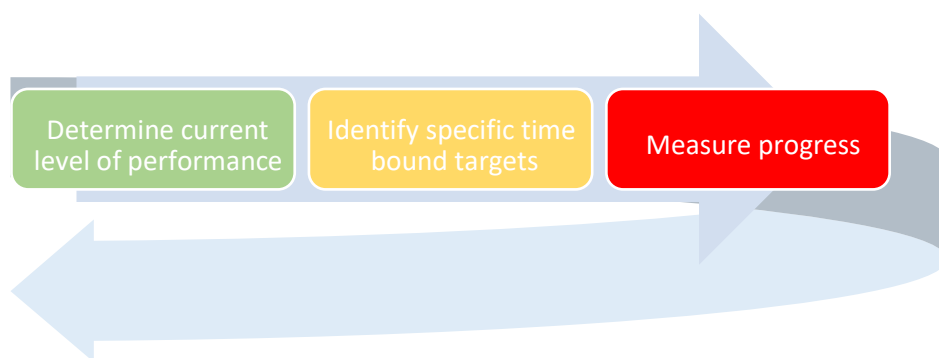
Complaints

If parents have a complaint about the Special Ed. provision made, then they should in the first instance make an appointment to speak to the SEN coordinator and then the principal.

The complaint will be investigated and dealt with as early as possible. If the matter is not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, then the matter proceeds to the B.O.M.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Pupils' progress in relation to achieving their targets will be regularly and carefully monitored. This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This will lead to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe as outlined below.



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.

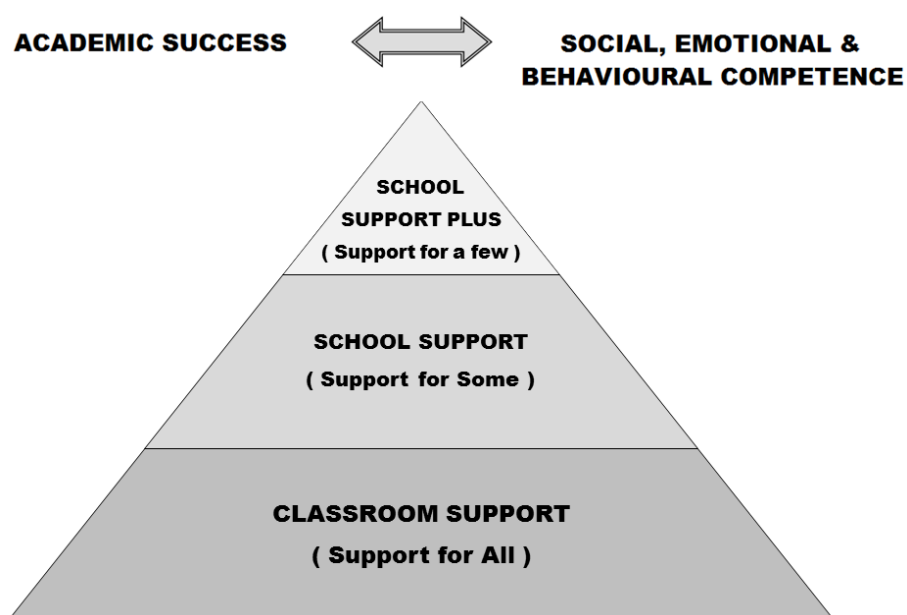
Signature of the Chairperson of the Board of Management: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Student Support File	
Name of Student:	
Date of Birth:	
School:	
Date File Opened:	
Date File Closed:	

A Continuum of Support



Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concern. We gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

Student Support File, Log of Actions

[illegible]

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the Teacher(s)

For help, see 'SEN, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', *BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers* pp.71-74; *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers*, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

Student's Name:		Age:	
Lead Teacher:		Class/Year:	
Start Date of Plan:			
Review Date of Plan:			
Student's Strengths and Interests:			
Priority Concerns:			
Possible Reasons for Concerns :			
Targets for the Student:			
Strategies to help the Student Achieve the Targets:			
Staff Involved and Resources Needed:			
Signature of Parent(s)/ Guardian(s):			
Signature of Teacher:			

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

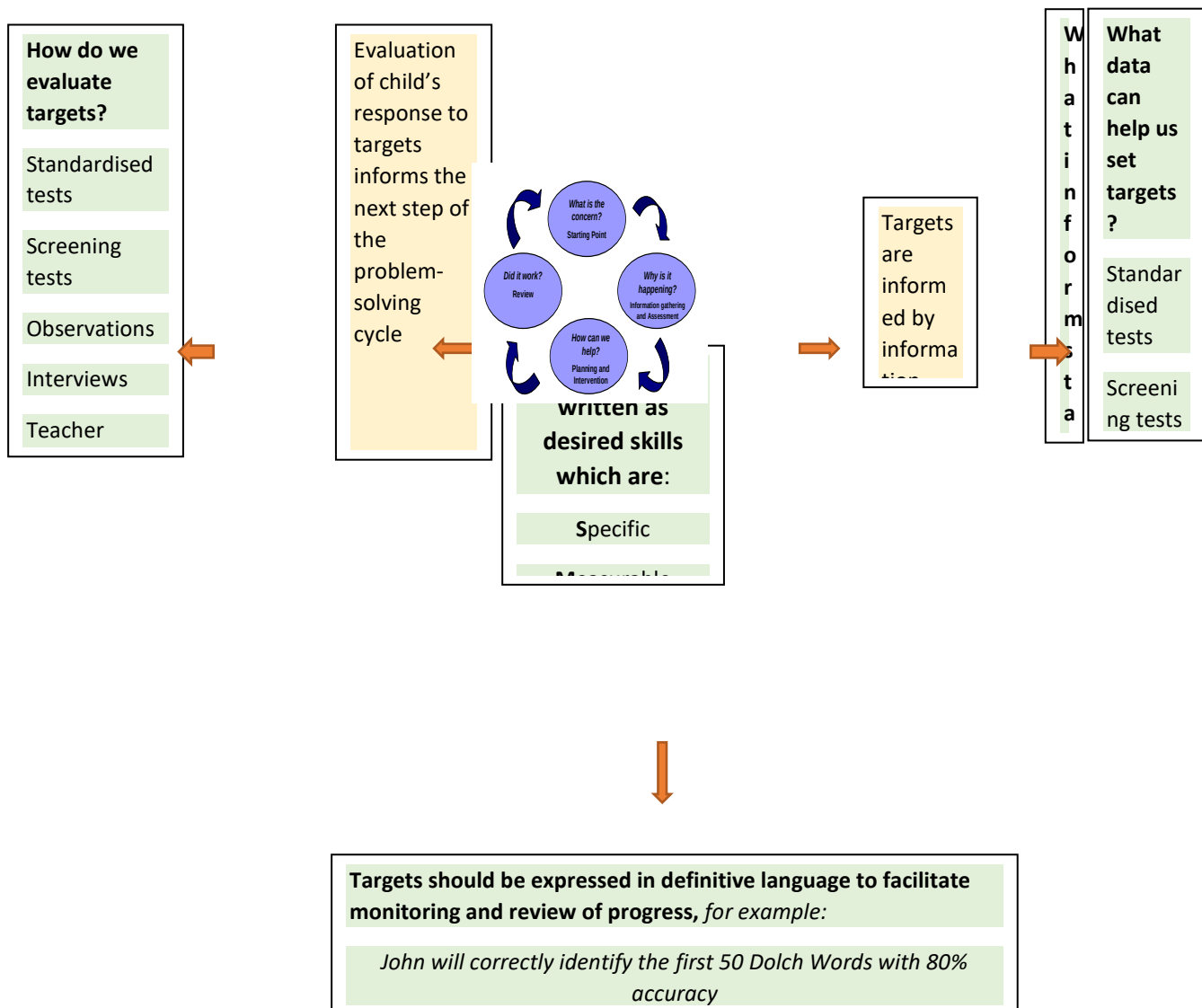
For help, see 'SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'BESD: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers', 'Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools'.

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 2: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving-framework



Appendix 3:

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		

Appendix 4

Exceptional Ability & Giftedness Policy

Definition and Background:

'An able child is one that achieves or has the ability to achieve at a level significantly in advance of their peer group. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range'. (Eyre, 1999)

- Children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence (an IQ score of 130+, 98th Percentile)
- Giftedness is recognised as a 'disability' or special education condition in the Education Act (1998).

School Ethos:

We, the teaching staff at Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg have agreed to cater for those pupils who are exceptionally able in **academic** areas (i.e. the top 2% of the school population).

Those pupils who show exceptional talent in **non-academic** areas e.g. psychomotor ability, mechanical aptitude, visual and performing arts ability, will be given information regarding the relevant outside agencies.

Procedure for identification of pupils with Exceptional Ability

Criteria for Assessment:

1. A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able pupils:

- Annual standardised tests
- NRIT
- Psychological Assessments
- Teacher observation
- Parental requests
- Referral by other individuals, schools or organisations.

2. From first class onwards, pupils who score on or above the 98th percentile in the Micra **and** Sigma tests will then do the NRIT, NVRT and BPVS to gain a more definitive guide of their ability.

3. Where a teacher observes children displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic area, then further assessment may be carried out to establish giftedness. Where it is a non-academic area, the parent will be informed of outside agencies more suited to the development of the pupil's giftedness.

Catering for Pupils with Exceptional Ability:

G:01-8252858

S: www.tulach.ie

R: tulach@eircom.net

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.

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.

This policy is subject to review following the issue of NCCA Guidelines or at least every 3 years.

Policy was drafted on _____

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

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, and if so how?		
Recommended future actions – <i>what, how, who, when?</i>		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s) comment?		
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.

G:01-8252858

S: www.tulach.ie

R:tulach@eircom.net

Appendix 5

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: