

Ballybay Central National School

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Special Educational Needs Policy



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Introductory Statement

Our original SEN policy was coordinated by the learning support team, in consultation with staff in 2014. The development of our SEN policy was identified as one of our priorities during a whole school development planning day. This policy replaces the existing policy on SEN. We felt, as a staff, that it is necessary to review practice at this stage to reflect the changes that have evolved as we have implemented the new model.

School Information

Ballybay Central is a Catholic, rural school, under the patronage of the bishop of Elphin, within the rules of the Department of Education & Skills. It nestles in the lowlands of southern Roscommon, alongside Lough Ree and the River Shannon. We endeavour to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere that respects all children, regardless of their religious, social, cultural background or special educational needs. The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Educational Needs:

- 2 SET & 1 Part-time
- 1 Special Needs Assistant.
- 1 EAL teacher.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, The Disability Bill 2002, E.P.S.E.N Act 2004)
- fulfil DES circular 0013/17 (Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools).

Belief Statement

Our school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all our pupils in accordance with our mission statement, the resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management.

We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel that they are a valued part of our school community. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN) 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 the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- identify additional needs that our pupils may have
- allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs
- divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs
- track, monitor, review and report on the progress of children with additional needs
- communicate information between the SET team, principal, staff and parents/guardians

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

Principal:

The *Learning Support Guidelines (2000, P.39)* outlined the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school principal should

- Implement and monitor the school's Additional Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- 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
- assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher (i.e. SENCO)
- communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme
- allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress

SEN Co-ordinator:

SEN co-ordinator (SENCO)(supported by SEN Team) should:

- communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- liaise with SEN Team to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs
- coordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

SEN Class Coordinators (SENCC)

SEN Class Co-ordinators will be assigned from the SET team to each class level or stage *depending on staffing numbers*. They should

- regularly meet with class teachers to discuss the needs of the pupils in their class
- maintain a record of these meetings and decisions made
- advise the class teacher, where needed, of possible interventions to meet the needs of their pupils
- advise class teacher on procedures for availing of external special needs services
- support the class teacher in creating a Student Support File once additional support is implemented
- support the class teacher in the writing of classroom support plans
- where requested by the class teacher, meet parents to discuss moving a child from classroom support to school support or when referring to an outside agency
- communicate with the SENCO and the SET team regarding any concerns raised by class teachers at SET team planning meetings
- update and maintain class SEN records and test results
- liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs

Class Teacher:

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should

- implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, in collaboration with SEN Class Co-ordinators..
- discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SEN Class Co-ordinators to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- open a Pupil Support File once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support
- collaborate with staff to develop Individual Support Files or Group Support Files for each pupil in receipt of School Support
- meet and collaborate with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus.
- adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned
- liaise with and seek advice from their allocated Special Education Teacher

Special Education Teacher (SET) The

SET teacher should:

- familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs
- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- collaboratively develop and review Individual and Group Support Files for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- meet twice a year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review Support Files

- update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in class support basis
- support whole-school procedures for screening
- administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- coordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload
- discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received

Special Needs Assistants:

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76).

The SNA should

- support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils
- support learning and teaching in the classroom
- attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM
- attend IEP meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty
- maintain a record of support provided to their SEN pupil
- accompany SEN pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate

Parents/Guardians:

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parent/Guardian should:

- share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage
- support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team
- support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities

- inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage

Pupils:

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets
- become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

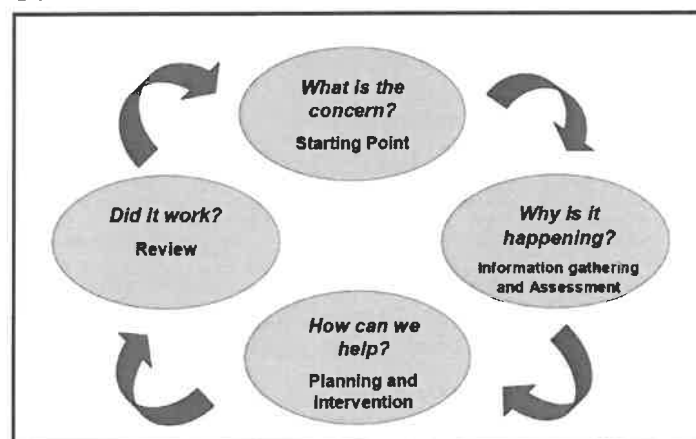
Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs

Continuum of Support

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

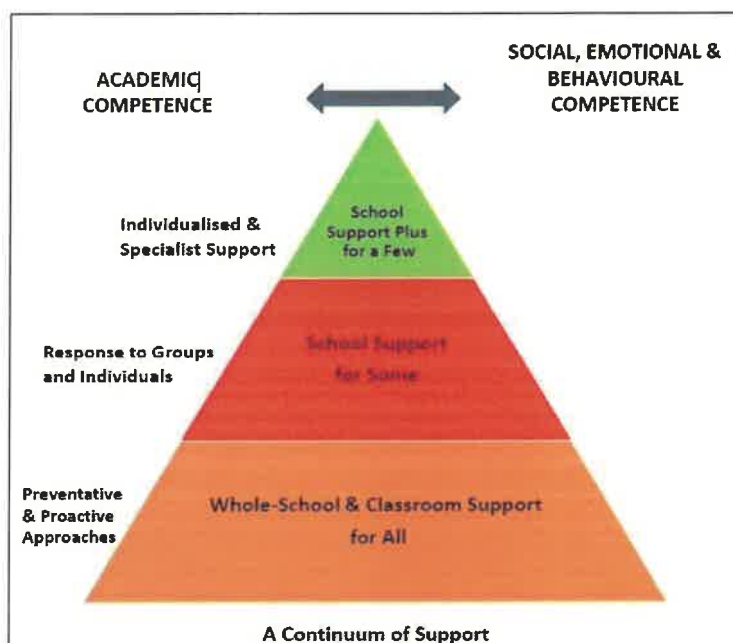
The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:



STAGE 1: CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The class teacher and parents, with support from the Special Education Teacher when necessary, discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

STAGE 2: SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET Team) in the problem solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

STAGE 3: SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

If a pupil's additional educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the

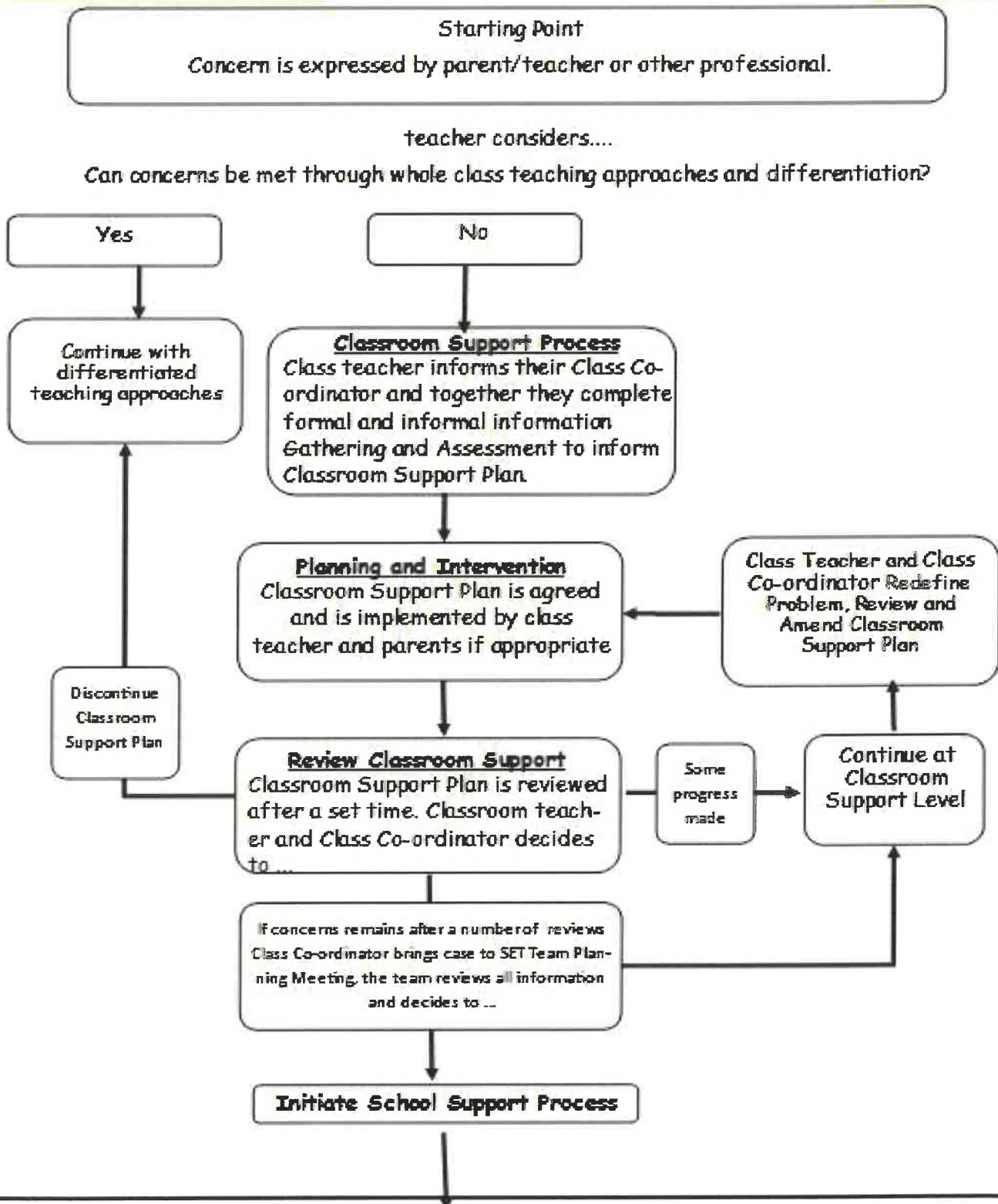
information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level.

The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers [https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps special needs guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps-special-needs-guidelines.pdf)

While most pupils' initial needs should be met through classroom based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school.

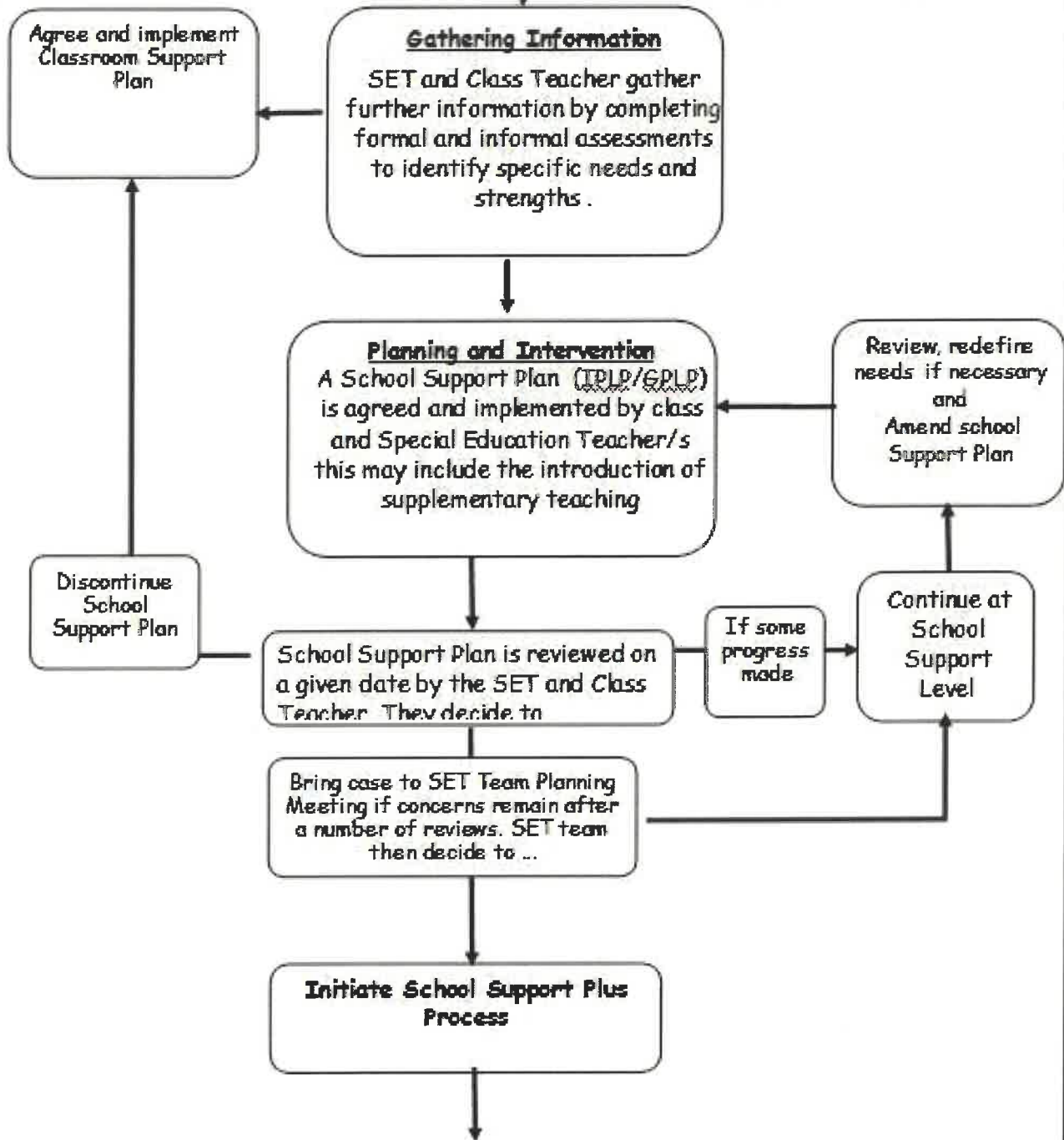
CLASSROOM SUPPORT PROCESS

STAGE 1



*adapted from NEPS Continuum of Support. For more detailed steps see page 12 - 15 of the continuum of support - Guidelines for teachers

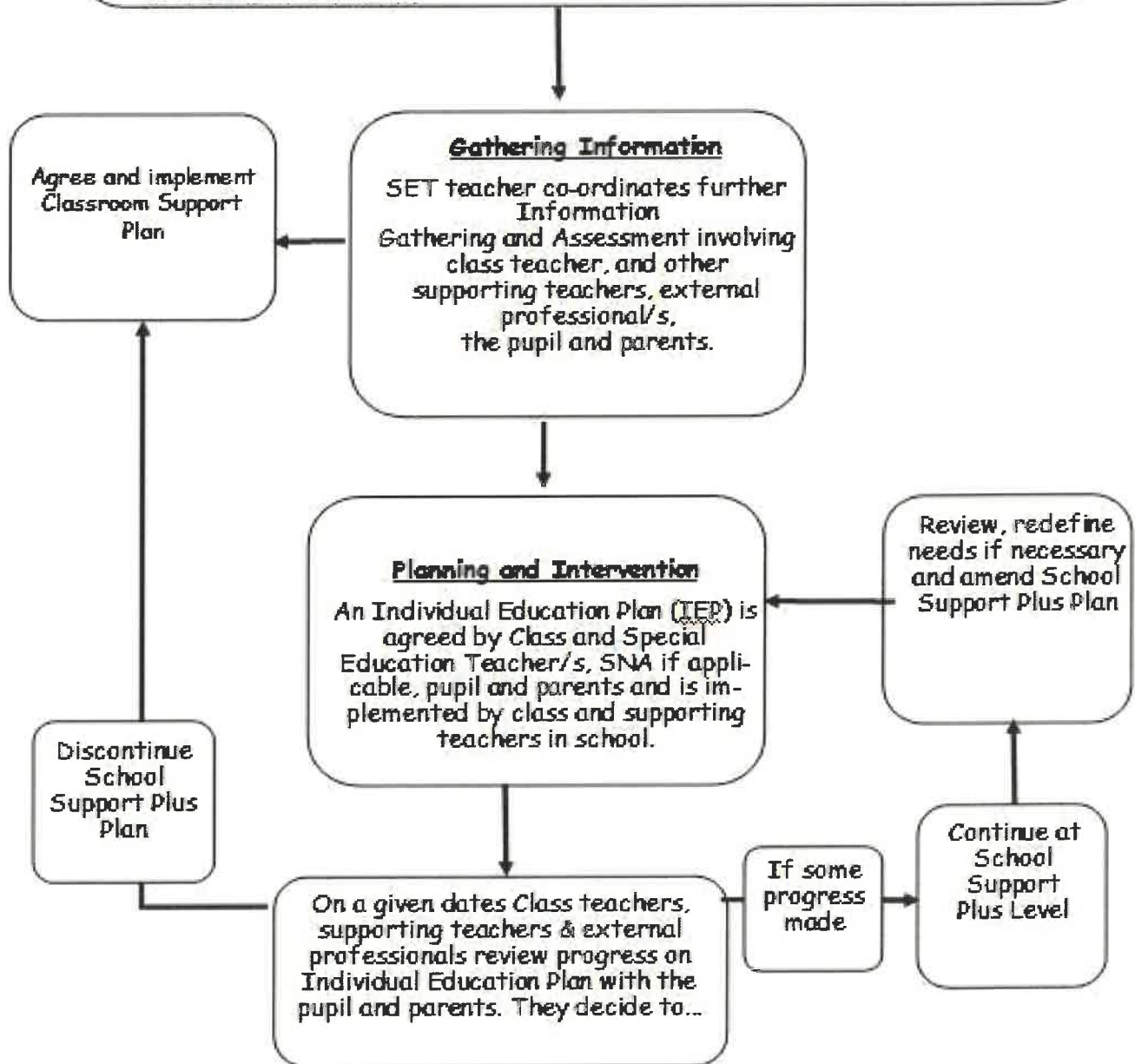
Starting Point
 Child has not made progress after interventions at classroom support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 2 intervention after Standardised testing. SET Teacher and Class teacher reviews the records detailing the Classroom Support process, re-defines the problem and...



*adapted from NEPS Continuum of Support. For more detailed steps see page 22 - 25 of the continuum of support - Guidelines for teachers

Starting Point
 Child has not made progress after interventions at school support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 3 intervention after a diagnosis from an outside agency.
 SET and Classroom teacher considers...

- Are the pupils needs causing significant barriers to learning or impeding development of social relationships?
- Is progress inadequate despite support provided?
- Were interventions; based on evidence from assessment; well planned and given sufficient time to work?



*adapted from NEPS Continuum of Support. For more detailed steps see page 32 - 35 of the continuum of support - Guidelines for teachers

Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans.

Assessment and Screening Tests:

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Observation, Checklists
- Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, MIST
- 1st class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths)
- 2nd class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths), NNRIT
- 3rd class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths)
- 4th class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths), NNRIT
- 5th class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths)
- 6th class: Observation, Checklists, New Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths)

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

Inventory of Test Materials

Screening Tests

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Busy at Maths Assessments (All Class Levels)
- Drumcondra (Spelling, Reading & Maths)
- New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)
- Access to GL Assessment Dyslexia Screener (Online)

Diagnostic Tests

In our school the following tests are available for administration:

- WIAT-III UK-T: Wechsler Individual Achievement Test for Teachers (3rd UK Edition)

Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.
- Promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Buddy Reading, The Literacy Box (PrimEd).
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g. Numicon, Hands-on approach, Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy, use of concrete materials, Brain Snack.
- Differentiation - adapting the learning environment. In-class support from the SET team.
- Team Teaching/Aistear.
- Withdrawing individuals/groups.

SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT

<p>1st Priority</p>	<p>School Support Plus Children with an identified complex need by an external professional, or with persistent contact with outside agencies.</p>	<p>Individual Education Plans</p>	<p>Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher Outside Agencies Type of support is dependent on the child's needs.</p>
<p>2nd Priority</p>	<p>School Support Children with an identified need, assessed by external professionals, <u>or</u> within the school, who are on or below the 20th percentile in literacy or numeracy.</p>	<p>Group or Individual Profile and Learning</p>	<p>Programme Type of Support In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal Personnel SET teacher Class Teacher</p>

Timetabling

When drawing up timetables it is important to remember that:

- timetables should be continually reviewed
- children should not miss the same subject each time they are withdrawn
- If a pupil is unavailable for their supplementary session due to special circumstances, the Special Education Teacher will attempt to reschedule the session with the cooperation of another teacher.
- Interruptions to classes/classrooms should be kept to a minimum.

Tracking, recording and reviewing progress

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process.

Student Support File

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is stored in a secure area (locked filing cabinet).

A class teacher or class coordinator should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 – Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored in a secure area (locked filing cabinet).

If a child has any reports these are stored in the SEN filing cabinet in the SET's room. It is the responsibility of the SET and Class Teacher to ensure the reports are read and the recommendations are being implemented.

Support Plans

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support.

Stage 1 – Classroom Support

A Support Plan at stage 1 is a **Classroom Support Plan (CSP)**. This is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SEN Class Coordinator which outlines the pupil's additional educational needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their child's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school term.

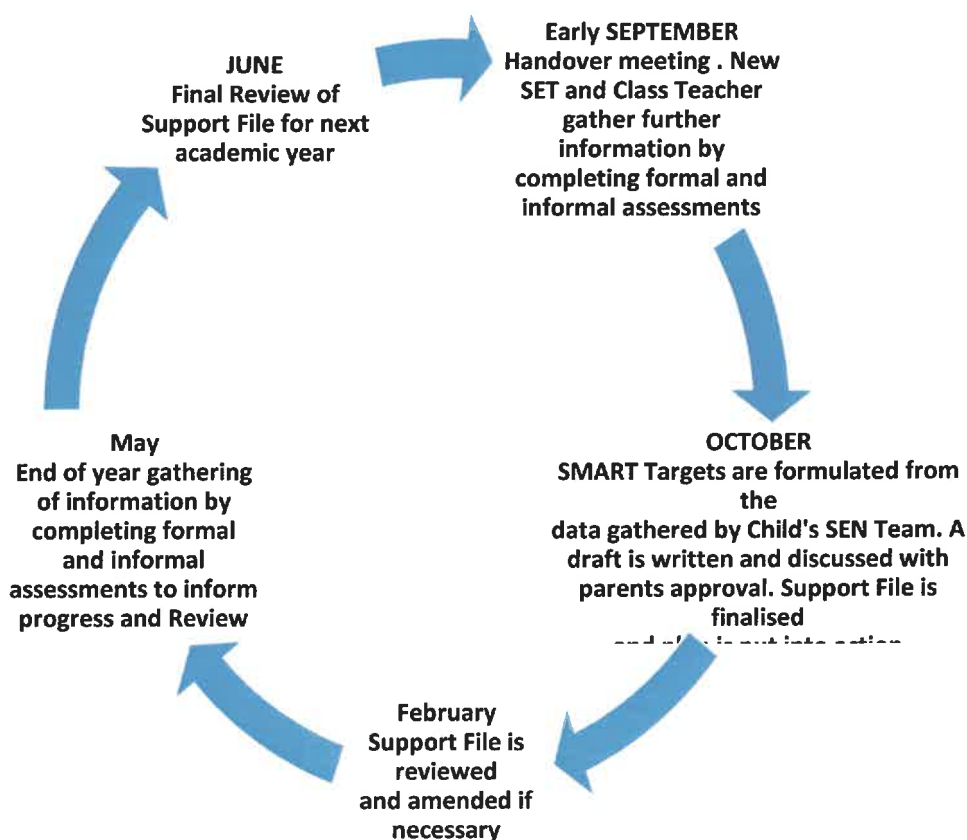
Stage 2 – School Support

A Support Plan at stage 2 is a **School Support File**. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by

focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil's response to the actions taken.

Stage 3 – School Support Plus

A Support Plan at stage 3 is a **School Support Plus Plan**. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed Special Education Teachers, in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered.



SEN Records

Individual SEN Files

It is the responsibility of SETs and Class Teachers to update and manage the files of the children on Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus. The following should be stored

- Psychological Report
- Reports from outside agencies
- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents, outside agencies and inter- school meetings
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff

Whole Class SEN Files

Whole class SEN records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the SET's room. It is the responsibility of the SETs to manage and update these. The following should be stored in these SEN folders:

- Whole School Overview
- Whole class test results (New Drumcondra, NNRIT)

Communication between SET Team/Principal/Class Teachers

SET timetables have been organised so that 2.00 - 3.00 each Friday is our designated co-ordination time. This allows all staff the opportunity to attend pupils support planning meetings, Team Teaching Planning Meetings and SEN consultation/planning/review meetings, when necessary. This flexibility ensures adequate cover for class teachers and also facilitates regular SET team planning meetings with the principal.

Health and Safety Issues

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

Supervision/Child Protection

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both they and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms where necessary.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in February 2023.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from February 2023. It will be reviewed in February 2025 by the Special Education Team and all staff.

Signed: 
(Chairperson)

Date: 23/2/23

Signed: Helen O'Toole
(Principal)

Date: 23.02.23