

# Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Bohermore is committed to providing a caring, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where all pupils are valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This policy outlines the school's approach to supporting pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), in line with Irish legislation and Department of Education guidance.

## 2. Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is informed by:

- Education Act, 1998
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004
- Disability Act, 2005
- Equal Status Acts, 2000–2018
- Department of Education Circulars and Guidelines
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE) recommendations

## 3. Definition of Special Educational Needs

In line with the EPSEN Act (2004):

"A child has special educational needs if they have a restriction in their capacity to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health, or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a special educational need."

In Bohermore NS, support is also provided for mainstream pupils both with and without a formal diagnosis, particularly where pupils are identified as being in need of additional support. This includes children who score at or below the 20th percentile in standardised tests in literacy or numeracy.

## 4. Aims of the Policy

- To ensure pupils with SEN are supported to access the full curriculum.
- To promote inclusion, equality of opportunity, and the development of independence.
- To identify, assess, and provide appropriate interventions for pupils with SEN as early as possible.
- To ensure mainstream pupils, both with and without a diagnosis, receive support where needed, particularly where performance falls below the 20th percentile in standardised assessments.

- To work in partnership with parents/guardians and external agencies to support pupil development.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Board of Management:***

- The overall responsibility for the provision of education to all children, including children with SEN, lies with the Board of Management.
- The BOM ensures that SET resources are only used to support children with SEN
- The BOM ensures that advanced preparation for team teaching takes place
- The Board of Management has responsibility for overseeing the development , implementation and review of school policies and services in relation to the inclusion of children with SEN

### ***Principal:***

- Development of inclusive whole-school policies and procedures to support inclusion of all children
- Ensure that children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of support
- Provide clarity on roles and responsibilities in relation to the provision of Special Education Teaching.
- The principal ensures that the board of management is kept fully informed on the deployment of special education teaching resources.
- Principals oversee how the resources, including human resources, and special education teaching hours, which are provided to the school to support children with special educational needs, are being used to ensure that the children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support. The principal may delegate specific functions to other members of the staff.
- Ensures effective engagement with early learning and care settings and with post primary schools to support the transition of children with special educational needs.
- Deploys teachers who have the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding to special education teaching roles.
- Ensures that systems are in place for effective collaboration between special education teachers and classroom teachers for the sharing of relevant information on children's needs, to ensure continuity of provision for the children.

- Facilitates teacher professional learning (TPL) for all teachers in relation to whole school inclusive teaching and learning practices, and to the education of children with special educational needs.
- Encourages special education teachers to undertake the Post Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers that is available through a number of Higher Education Institutes.
- Ensures that all school staff, including class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants (SNAs), are clearly informed of their roles and responsibilities.
- Provides opportunities for the sharing of specialist knowledge with school staff as part of promoting a whole school inclusive culture.
- Ensures that whole school procedures are established to facilitate the meaningful and effective involvement of parents/guardians, children and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensures that the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs (Appendix 1 in SET guidelines) is updated.
- Ensures that all children identified with special educational needs, who receive additional teaching support, have their needs documented in a Student Support File.
- Ensures that a Classroom/Student Support Plan is developed and contained within the Student Support File for all children identified at all levels of the Continuum of Support.

**SEN Teacher:**

The role of the Special Education Teacher includes:

- Contributing to the development of an inclusive school culture, demonstrated through ethos, values and inclusive school policies and practices.
- Promoting inclusive whole school preventative and proactive teaching and learning approaches.
- Developing inclusive school structures and systems in the organisation of provision for children with special educational needs.
- Leading in the identification and provision of support for children with special educational needs in the school context, using the Continuum of Support problem solving process.

- Liaising closely with the principal on the development, implementation and monitoring of whole school approaches to the education of children with special educational needs.
- Leading, in collaboration with the class teachers, on the development of Student Support Files and Student Support Plans for children with special educational needs who are identified in the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs at the levels of School Support (Some) and School Support Plus (Few)
- Collaborating, liaising and communicating with parents/guardians, the child, other relevant teachers and staff, the school principal and relevant others, as part of the problem solving process.
- Engaging and collaborating with external agencies and services outside of the school as appropriate and necessary.
- Planning to support transitions for children with special educational needs.
- Using evidence informed teaching and learning approaches to support the special educational needs of children, and monitoring response to intervention.
- Sharing relevant information, regarding the special educational needs of children, with class teachers to support their meaningful engagement and participation in lessons.
- Advising and supporting class teachers when requested.
- Engaging in TPL to upskill and develop the knowledge, competencies and skills required for high quality provision of support for children with special educational needs
- Reflecting on individual professional practice, including teaching and learning approaches, to enhance provision.
- Preparing and planning on a weekly basis in order to address each child's specific needs as reflected in support plan targets.

### ***Class Teacher:***

Class teachers adapt their teaching approaches and methodologies, and make specific accommodations for children within the class, in response to concerns arising in relation to an individual child's progress, application, communication, emotional regulation, or interaction with peers. Class teachers have primary responsibility for the progress and care of all children in their classrooms, including children with special educational needs. Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of children in schools.

The duties of the class teacher are as follows:

- Availing of relevant TPL, to develop capacity, knowledge and understanding of special educational needs.
- Using a variety of appropriate methodologies, activities, experiences and materials to cater for children's individual needs and to create a stimulating and supportive classroom environment.
- Collaborating with the principal, other relevant teachers, parents/guardians and external professionals, as required, to support children with special educational needs to participate and engage in meaningful learning.
- Identifying children's strengths, interests, and priority learning needs, to inform the planning, implementation, assessment and regular review of intervention at each level of the Continuum of Support.
- Developing Classroom Support Plans for children with emerging needs who require additional classroom based support.
- Recording all actions and keeping copies of the Classroom Support Plan/s in the Student Support File.
- Supporting the development of Student Support Plans in collaboration with special education teachers, parents/guardians, children, external professionals as required, in order to plan assessments, interventions, and to track children's progress at the levels of School Support Some and School Support Plus Few.
- Ensuring that lessons are accessible through the use of a variety of approaches, including active learning, small group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction.
- Identifying and responding to the learning difficulties and learning preferences of children with special educational needs.
- 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 termly SSF 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
- 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 SEN 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

## **6. Identification and Assessment**

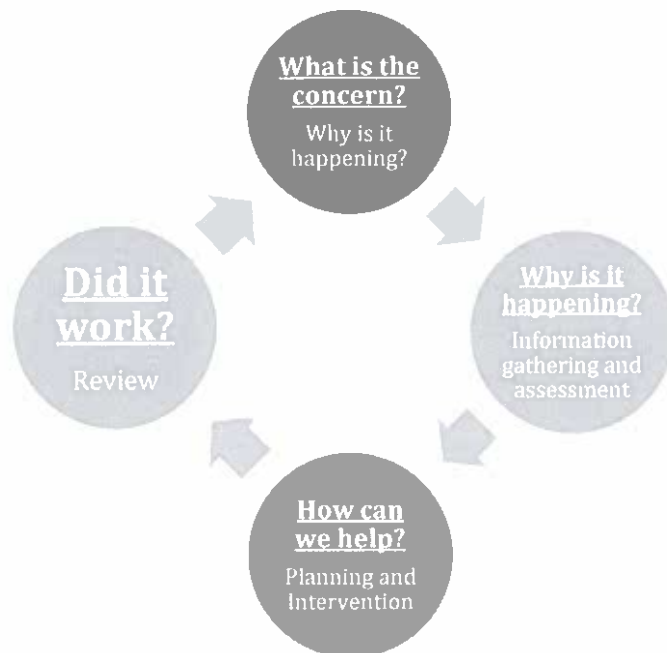
- SEN or additional learning needs may be identified through teacher observation, parental concern, assessment results, or professional reports.
- Mainstream pupils who score at or below the 20th percentile in standardised literacy or numeracy tests will be considered for supplementary support.
- Standardised assessments, diagnostic tests, and external professional assessments may be used.
  
- The school follows a Continuum of Support approach as outlined by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):
  - Classroom Support
  - School Support
  - School Support Plus

### **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 – 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 teacher and parents 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 (SEN 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 special 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. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.

We gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs by using stages explained here

<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.\*\*\*

### **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, Whole School Plan designed assessment, BPVSIII

Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, Whole School Plan designed assessment, MIST, BPVSIII Drumcondra Early Numeracy + Early Literacy

1st class-6th Class: Observation, Checklists, Drumcondra Reading & Spelling, Sigma T. Maths.

- NNRIT: 1st, 3rd & 5th class

As a school, we also carry out a range of other assessments when necessary (result does not match other assessments)

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)
- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test
- Sigma-T
- New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT)
- Dyslexia Screening Test (DST-I)
- Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy S1
- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy ST
- YARC

### **Diagnostic Tests**

In our school the following tests are available for administration:

- Drumcondra test of Early Numeracy-
- Diagnostic
- Basic Number Diagnostic Test
- NEALE Analysis
- YARC
- Drumcondra Spelling Test
- NEPS Word Test
- Early Literacy Test

## **7. Provision of Support**

- A blended model of support may include in-class support, group withdrawal, and one-to-one interventions.
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Student Support Plans will be developed for pupils with significant needs, in collaboration with parents and external professionals where relevant.
- Pupils without a formal diagnosis but who are under the 20th percentile in standardised tests may be supported under the Continuum of Support framework.
- The allocation of SET hours will be determined by pupil needs and available resources.

## 8. Collaboration with Parents and External Agencies

- The school values ongoing communication with parents/guardians in relation to SEN provision.
- The school may engage with the NCSE, NEPS, HSE services (speech and language, occupational therapy, CAMHS), and other relevant agencies.

## 9. Staff Development

- The school encourages continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers and SNAs in the area of SEN.
- Staff will be supported to access relevant training opportunities as needed.

## 10. Monitoring and Review

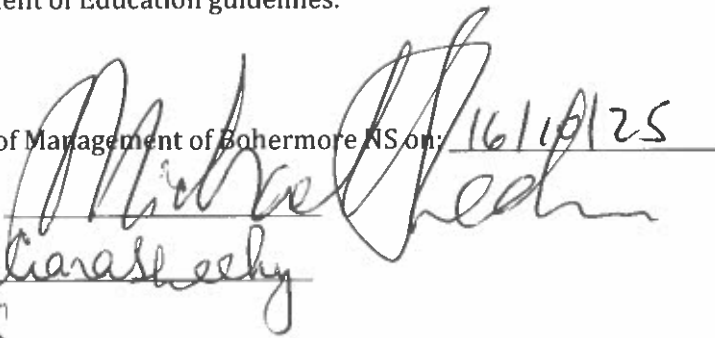
- SEN provision is regularly reviewed by the SEN team and school leadership to ensure effectiveness.
- This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required due to changes in legislation or Department of Education guidelines.

Ratified by the Board of Management of Bohermore NS on:

Signed (Chairperson):

Signed (Principal):

Date: 16/10/25

The block contains handwritten signatures and a date. The top signature is for the Chairperson, followed by the signature for the Principal. To the right of these signatures is the date 16/10/25, which is written over a horizontal line.