SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS POLICY (S.E.N.) BALLYFIN N.S.

Contents

1 Definition of Special Needs.

The Educational Act 1998 defines S. E. N. as "the educational needs of students who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students".

The S.E.N. could also be defined as "all those children whose disability or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education, which is normally provided for children of the same age or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom, is not sufficiently challenging".

2 The Rationale (Why/How).

This policy has been put in place after due consideration of the following factors.
   (a) The legislation, circulars and information presently in place.
   (b) The enrolment policy of the school.
   (c) Consultation between teaching staff, ancillary staff, parents, B.O.M., the Inspectorate, N.E.P.S. S.N.A., Agencies supporting the child, e.g. H.S.E., occupational therapists, speech & language therapists etc.
   (d) Health and Safety issues.
   (e) The school ethos and mission statement.
   (f) The number of pupils in the school.
   (g) The number of children with disabilities and the nature of their disabilities.
   (h) The resources available.
   (i) Assisting parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
   (j) Existing policy review.

3. The Ethos/Philosophy in the School.

(The Spirit and Atmosphere).
Ballyfin School Ethos: Ballyfin N.S. aims to provide a happy positive and secure learning environment, where each child can grow and develop socially, physically, academically spiritually and emotionally. Our ethos reflects and respects the values and traditions of the community in which it is situated. It depends on the co-operation of pupils, parents, teachers, B.O.M, parish and community.

Mission Statement:
Our mission is to provide for the academic, physical, emotional, social and spiritual education of our pupils. The varying needs of all the children, the talents, personalities and learning styles of both pupils and teachers will determine our delivery and approach.
We endeavour to build on the children's strengths and support them when they encounter difficulties. We recognise that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we depend on their support and co-operation together with that of the B.0.M., D.E.S. and the wider community.

4. Aims of Policy.

- To outline procedures to be followed in relation to pupils with special needs.
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special needs.
- To enable pupils with special needs to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as is possible.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of parents of pupils with special needs.

5. Gathering Information

(a) Enrolment Day – Gather information on a child with special needs (see forms attached). The principal will meet parents / guardians on this day.
(b) School identifies health and safety issues arising from the enrolment of a special needs child e.g. access, toilets, supervision, administration of medicine etc.
(c) Request copies of reports, assessments tests etc. Principal/class teacher/S.E.T. team meets with parents/guardians.
(d) Teacher observations, class testing, use of checklists, standardised tests.
(e) Advice from S.E.T. team.
(f) Use of staged approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme planning.
(g) Member of S.E.T. team/class teacher consult with parents/guardians. Outline extra support being provided to child. Clarify departmental guidelines i.e. circulars.

6. Prevention Strategies.

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible the following strategies are being implemented.

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development and to the teaching of other aspects of literacy /numeracy as outlined in the school policy:
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for parents of incoming junior infants, the provision of a Tips for Parents booklet, the arrangement of formal and informal parent-teacher meetings and provision of regular school newsletters as well as collaboration with the Parents Association.

- Early intervention by L.S teacher.
- Ongoing observation and assessment by class teacher.
- Book fair each year.
- Paired reading, scheme between fourth class and junior infants in the 3rd and 4th term.

7. Early Identification/Screening/Referral

- Reports submitted at enrolment time.
- Teacher's observations, checklists, infant profiling, non–reading intelligence test. (N.R.I.T.)
- Difficulty needs to be communicated to parents/guardians at meeting.
- Proposed support for special needs pupils outlined.
- Staged approach adopted where appropriate (see below).
- Communicate with relevant outside agencies e.g. occupational therapists (O.T.), speech and language therapists, psychologists etc.
- Communication of information to Special Education Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.)

8. Early Intervention Programme and Good Management.

Many potential problems may be averted with early intervention and good management, with this in mind effective practice will occur if emphasis is placed on educational strategies to accommodate a wide range of learners with different aptitudes and achievements rather than targeting intervention which focuses on the individual. This tends to promote a greater sense of inclusiveness.

- all staff are fully aware of the schools Special Ed. Needs Policy for dealing with children and they implement these policies sensitively and thoroughly.
- all staff have regard for the academic social and emotional development of each pupil.
- children are given sufficient opportunity to over learn to automaticity levels those skills that require an automatic response.
- they are helped towards greater independence in learning through practical guidance in organisational strategies.
- they are given/encouraged to develop their own coping strategies.
- they are given guidance and practise in developing a comfortable, consistent handwriting style and strategies for improving presentation of work.
- formal teaching of writing skills is given i.e. planning, drafting, editing, re-editing.
- advice and practice in skimming and scanning text is given to develop higher levels literacy skills.
- they are encouraged to use mind maps as a means of organising their thinking.
- pupils are guided increasingly according to age to play their part in self checking and proof reading.
- pupils are taught, where possible, using a multi-sensoring approach i.e. using visual, auditory and motor/ kinaesthetic means and teaching is structured, sequential and cumulative.
- the environment in which they learn is modified to limit potential distractions.
- regular access to the use of appropriate ICT resources to develop word processing.

General
- such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous teacher. and priority when establishing parental contact.
- group teaching.
- modifying presentation and questioning.
- techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in activities.
- placing an emphasis on oral language across the curriculum.
- providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
- setting learning targets at an appropriate level.
- providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress.
- carrying out analysis to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty.
- setting up a buddy system 'high achievers working collaboratively with low achievers'.
- modelling good involvement in literary/numeracy.

Parents
- using ICT where available to support learning in literacy/numeracy.
- book sharing /reading.
- storytelling.
- paired reading.
- discussions about school and other activities to build vocabulary and thinking skills.
- counting and measuring involving number.
- visits to park, library, museum.
- availing of real life activities to discuss importance of literacy/numeracy.

Staged Approach:

Stage 1.
 (a) Classroom support is the most common and typically the first response to emerging need. It is a response to pupils who have distinct or individual needs and who require approaches to learning and behaviour which are additional to or different from those required by other pupils in their class.

 (b) Problem solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The parent and teacher discuss the problem and consider ways of identifying the problem. This can be done by the class teacher administering screening measures to include:

 a. Phonic Skills Record Card.
 b. Phonological Awareness Screen Test.
 c. San Diego Quick Assessment.
 d. RAIN sentence reading.
 e. Mathemagic checklist.
 f. Fry Instant words.

 Screening checklist to include:
 a letter recognition.
 b letter – sounds relationship.
 c Dolch list appropriate to class level
 d Banger Dyslexia Test
 e Junior Infant Checklist

 Behaviour checklist
 a Classroom support checklist
 b Environmental/Physical Condition checklist

Sample Screening and Checklist   Appendix A

 (c) Classroom support incorporates the simple informal problem solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support learning needs.

 (d) Assessment is an integral part of drawing up a short plan of work and implementing strategies to address issues arising. The pupils benefits because they can be given instruction that is targeted to meet their individual strengths and needs and the teacher benefits because they can be certain that their pupils are getting the best possible instruction.
 If you know what the child can do on his/her own then you can predict what they should learn next ("Zone of proximal development"). If you know where a learner is struggling you can determine where to begin instruction.

See Appendix B for Examples:

(e) Interventions and Strategies:
Interventions are defined as specific research and/or evidence based strategies
that are designed to address very specific issues and problems that children are
experiencing with learning. Intervention should always be viewed as something
extra, something in addition to the general curriculum not instead of.
Strategies are the techniques used to instruct. They are the how-to part of teaching.

Literacy

(1) Word Identification
Rhyming
Phonemic manipulation.
Phonological awareness and phonics   **Appendix C**
Nursery Rhymes
Word Families – chunking
Word Walls - can be sight words.
                - can be function words.

Suffix   + Prefixes
Readers   Theatre
Repeated reading
Paired   reading
Choral   reading
Pattern Books   **Appendix D**

(2)   Language   Comprehension   **Appendix E**
  - Making words   **Appendix E**
Word ladders   **Appendix E**
Vocabulary   4 square   **Appendix E**
Main Idea Maps   **Appendix E**
Story Pyramid   **Appendix E**
Story Maps   **Appendix E**
K W L   **Appendix E**
Before, During, After   **Appendix E**

(3) **Strategic Knowledge.**
Self-checks
Writing checklist   **Appendix E**

Predictograms   - cover, title, heading, words.
Chapters, headings, pictures
Vocabulary   **Appendix E**

Directed Reading   Thinking Activity. Read small section of a larger passage then make
predictions. As they continue to read to next predetermined part they confirm or adjust
predictions.
                Appendix E

(4) (i) **Before Reading Strategic**

- Preteach difficult vocabulary
- Set a purpose for reading
- Set comprehension objectives
- Chunk into manageable parts
- Read aloud
- Motivate prior knowledge
- Preview and predict

(ii) **During Reading Strategies**
  Questioning   - literal
                     - inferential
                     - evaluative.
  Vocabulary checks
  Main Idea
  Think Aloud

(iii) **After Reading**
   Summarise
   Main Idea
   Paraphrase
   Retell
  Sequence

(5) Concept Books: Appendix F
   Alphabet Books
   Counting Books, Colour, Five Senses, Size and shape, spatial awareness

Numeracy
 - Interventions and Strategies

A   Mental Maths

  (a) **Target Boards.**
     A collection of numbers on a grid.
     Placed on whiteboard /wall
     Using the same board it is possible to tailor questions making it particularly
      suitable for differentiation.
      Numbers, measures, time, money, etc.
     decimals, fractions, percentages.

Questions

Senior Infants :   Show me 6
                      show me the number before ….
                      show me the number after …
                      any number before….
  to
 Sixth :   A square number between 30 & 40
                      8^2
                    A prime number
                    10% of -
                     5% of –
                    Increase 80 by 50% etc.

(b) Closed and open questions.
      eg closed – what's the total of 16+4
        Open   - find any two numbers that total 20.

(c) Loop Games   Q +A
                Start
                Who has   I have

(d) Number Scrabble:
      Write ten numbers and a few (2/3) symbols on the board and allow 2/3 minutes
      to come up with as many numbers sentences as possible.
                            .
(e) Counting Activity.
        To count in tens and units.
        Write Tens and Units on whiteboard.
        The teacher begins the count 1, 2, 3,4, and the class join in. The teacher points at
        tens so children count on in tens from stopping point 19 29 39 etc until teacher
        points at units and class switch to counting in units.

        Variation
        Count backward.
        Include counting in hundreds.

B. Tables: Lines of Development.
      Counting objects, counting all, counting on, counting on from larger addend,
      thinking strategies, instant recall.

(a) Strategies for Addition.
      (i)   Add 0
      (ii) Add 1
      (iii) Add 2
      (iv) Doubles
      (vi) Near Doubles
      (v) Ten Facts
      (vi) Nine Facts
      (vii) Five and
      (ix) Through Ten
      (vii) Ten and

(b) Multiplication Tables   Commutative law

(i) Commutative law halves numbers of tables from 100 to 50 exuding the o facts.

(ii) Zero: any number times O = O

(iii) One: any number times 1 = number

(iv) Ten: end with O.

(v) Two is an even number. Even numbers end in 0/2/4/6/8.

(vi) Five: examine the 5 times table pattern in the last digit. 0/5/0/05

an odd number times 5 = answer ending in - 5

an even number times 5 = answer ending -   0

compare answers of 5 x and 10 x tables

each 5 times answer is ½ ten times answer.

(vii) **Nine**

- Use finger maths.

Place both hands on table in front of the number

e.g.   3 x 9 =

Curl third finger on left hand.

Fingers to left are tens   2.

Fingers to right are units   7

Answer 27

- Pattern in Answer

Tens number is always 1 less than multiplying number.

Digits in answer always add to 9.

(viii) Four = double 2

3 x 2 = 6

3 x 4 = 12

(ix)   16 facts left, 6 are commutative

=) 10 facts to be taught.

(i) 3 x 3 – square numbers

(2) 3 x 6 / 6 x 3

(3) 3 x 7 / 7 x 3

(4) 3 x 8 / 8 x 3

Teach these as 2 times and add 1 more.

Last 6 facts are perceived as most difficult.

6 x 6 *   Square numbers

6 x 7

6 x 8

7 x 7 *

7 x 8

8 x 8 *

(c)   BOMDAS

BOMDAS is priority of sequence of operations according to Algebraic logic.

Brackets, Orders, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction.

(d)   Problem Solving.

(a) R U D E approach.

1   Read the problem.
2   Underline key words.
3   Draw a picture or diagram.
4   Estimate the answer.

(b)   R O S E approach.

1. Read the problem, draw diagram, act out
2   Organise, list operations.
3   Solve.
4   Evaluate.

(c)   R A V E   CCC.

1   Read the problem
2   Attend to key words
3   Visualise the problem. Draw diagram
4. Estimate answer.
5. Choose the numbers to use.
6   Calculate answer.
7   Compare answer with estimate.

(d) If a problem uses large numbers repeat it using small numbers.

(e) If a problem uses mixed/decimal numbers repeat it using whole numbers only.

(f) Commercial Games

J/S Infants	Spotty Dog Game
F/S Classes	Sun Swamp
	Fishy? Addition
	What Time is it?
	Potty Professor (+, -)
	Smath
	Snap it up (+, -)
	Meteor Maths Bingo (+,-)
Third/Six Class	What Time is it?
	Polly Professor (x, ÷)
	Smath
	Snap it up (x, ÷)
	Meteor Maths Bingo (x, ÷)

E.   **Early number**

(a)   **Card Games**

(i)   **Show most/least.**
Divide all grades between players laid face down. All players turn over top card. Whoever has highest value card wins a cube /counter.
Play continues until all cards are gone. If both players turn over card of similar highest value both children get cube.

(ii)   **Card Dominoes.**
Playing cards – use two suits only. 1 – 5 Junior Infants, 1 – 10 Senior Infants.
Divide all cards between 2/4 players. Children hold cards facing them.
Whoever has 3/7 ◊ starts play. Next player can play 5/8 ◊ or start new chain using 7/ 3 clubs.
If you cannot play you pass. Play continues until all cards are gone.

(b).   **Dice Games.**
(i) **Connect 4.**
Resources: number grid, dice, counting. Player 1 rolls dice, covers number.
Player 2 rolls and covers number. Player continues until 4 is in a row.

(iii)   **Roll a Tower.**
Die & Unifix ?
Player 1 rolls die and collects cubes.
Player 2 proceeds. After 3 goes whoever has tallest tower wins.

(c)   **Number Frames.**

5 Frames

Use two colours

Ten Frame

(d) **Whole Class Counting Games.**
(ii) **Rockets:**
Count in unison from 1 -10 and down. Jumping out of chairs at 1 for blast off.
Start at different numbers.

(ii)   **Finger – counting co-ordination.**
Count from 1 –10 while holding up appropriate number of fingers.
And from 1–10 while holding down fingers.

(iii)   **Clap, quack or moo.**
In a circle the pupils take it in turns to clap the numbers e.g. Pupil A claps once as they say one. Next pupil claps twice for two and so on. When they've reach ten the next child can start clapping down from ten. Various animal noises can be used instead of clapping.

<u>**Stage**</u> 11:
      (a) If intervention is considered necessary at stage ∏, then pupil should be referred
         to S.E.T. team (with parental permission) for further testing.
         Parents, class teacher and member of S.E.T. team should be involved in drawing
         up a learning programme. This programme should be implemented in the classroom
         and at home. This programme may be put in place for a child with learning difficulties
         and for a child who is exceptionally able.

      (b) In case of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, more urgent action
         may be needed. The pupils' needs should, with parental permission, be discussed
         with the National Educational Psychological Services (N.E.P.S). The case should
         be referred to the H.S.E.- Health Services Executive. This may lead to a
         Behavioural management programme being implemented at home and in class.
         It may also lead to referral for further specialist assessment (stage 111).

<u>**Stage**</u> 111**:**
     (a) Some pupils who continue to present with significant learning difficulties will
        require more intensive intervention at stage 111. School may finally request
        a consultation /assessment of need from a specialist outside the school on request of
        pupils with learning difficulties or with mild or moderate behavioural problems.
        (or both). The children who have failed to make progress after supplementary
        teaching on a behavioural programme will need further support.

     (b) Specialist advice (psychologists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists,
        Occupational therapist etc) is sought. Following recommendations from these
        specialists, class teacher /S.E.T., in consultation with relevant specialist will draw up a
        learning programme for the child. This may include resource-teaching time for the pupil
        involved. Parents will be consulted throughout the process.

     (c) In the case of pupils identified at an early age as having very significant special
        education needs, intervention at stage 111 will be necessary on their entry to school.

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10. **Standardised Testing**

  Tests administered in Ballyfin N.S.
 (a) Non-Reading Intelligence Test (N.R.I.T.). The test incorporates three levels, which tests a
    child's level of general intelligence. Since it is administered orally it does not place
    children with poor reading skills at a disadvantage.

Level 1:	Ages 6 : 4	to	8 : 3
Level 2:	Ages 7 : 4	to	9 : 3
Level :3	Ages 8 : 4	to	10 :11
	Ages 11: 0	to	13 :11

Some children who are not of the age for a particular level will get an approx score
Intelligence test results tend to confirm the teachers judgements of the child's general ability but
potentially they are most useful when they differ from the teacher's expectations.
Such differences may be a means of throwing new light on some children and may help to identify
children in need of further investigation for forms of special education.
Further overall class results may help the teacher in the planning and delivery of education, catering
more fully for levels of general intelligence, within the class.

Micra T Test – **Mary Immaculate College Reading Attainment Test.**
- A series of reading tests.
- Provides accurate information regarding the reading performance of Irish primary school children.
- For use at the end of senior infants up to sixth class.
- Compares reading standards nationally.
- Helps monitor progress, tracks changes in performance over time.
- Helps identify pupils with reading difficulties/or exceptional ability.

Sigma – T Test – Standardised Irish Graded Mathematics Attainment Tests.
- A series of mathematical attainment tests.
- Provide accurate information regarding the mathematical performance of pupils.
- For use at the end of senior infants up to sixth class.
- Compares maths performance standards nationally.
- Helps monitor progress, tracks changes in performances over time.
- Helps identify pupils performing poorly in maths/or pupils with exceptional ability.

Drumcondra Reading - Standardised Reading Attainment Test Old
                    (New revised test used from June 2022)
- A series of reading tests
- Provides detailed information on three areas for First and Second Classes
  - Comprehension, Vocabulary and Word Analysis
- Provides detailed information on two areas for Third to Sixth Classes
  - Comprehension and Vocabulary
- For use for Second to Sixth Class
- Helps monitor progress, tracks changes in performance over time.
- Helps identify pupils with reading difficulties/exceptional ability

Drumcondra Spelling – Standardised Spelling Attainment Test
- A series of spelling exercises:
  - spelling individual words, filling in the missing word, find the spelling error and correct
- For use for First to Sixth Classes
- Helps monitor progress, tracks changes in performance over time
- Helps identify pupils with specific spelling difficulties

Micra T / Sigma T - Note of Explanation.
Percentiles :   85/% = 85th percentile.
This means a child with this score had surpassed approximately 85% of children of his/her age at a national level.

          8% = 8th percentile.
This means a child with this score has performed better than only 8% of children of his/her age at a national level.
These scores may appear on your child's report.
- Further diagnostic testing will be administered to children identified with S.E.N.S. arising from standardised testing.
- Other standardised tests may be used to complement or replace the standardised tests in use at present.

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11. Circular 24/03
     General Allocations Model.

Allocation of resources for pupils with Special Education Needs in National Schools.

   (a) High Incidence Disabilities - Specific learning difficulty eg Dyslexia.
                                                          - Mild general learning disabilities.
                                                          - Mild speech & language difficulties
                                                          - And children at or below the 10th percentile
                                                            in numeracy/ literacy in a standardised test.

These high incidence children will be given extra support from our S.E.T. team in a group setting. Children may be withdrawn from the classroom or a member of the S.E.T team may come into the classroom to work with a class teacher and group.

          (b)   Low Incidence Disabilities   - Hours of Resource teaching support
                                                                   available to school per week.

Physical Disability	- 3
Hearing Impairment	- 4
Visual Impairment	3 - 5
Emotional Disturbance	3 - 5
Severe Emotional Disturbance	- 5
Moderate General Learning Disability -	3 - 5
Severe /Profound General Learning Disability	- 5
Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorders	- 5
Assessed Syndrome (eg Down Syndrome)	3- 5

(Taking into account the S.E.N.s including the level of general learning disability.
in conjunction with one of the above low incidence disabilities.)

These low incidence children will be allocated resource hours which may be used in a 1:1 teacher pupil situation or in a group setting (ie children with the same disability and same level of maturity, plus social groups).

Circular 24/03 clearly states an exclusive reliance on using resource teaching for individual tuition only is contrary to the principal of integration in learning and teaching. Primary schools should display their allocated education resources in a way that best accommodates the special educational needs of children.

These resources have been reduced by 15%

General Allocation Model :

Primary Circular- 0007/2012
General allocation model of support in being adjusted to combine general allocation and language support into a single and simplified allocation for all schools.

The G.A M. allocation is now based on the number of mainstream classroom posts in schools in the current year starting 2011/2012.

Ballyfin being a mixed school will receive an allocation per mainstream classroom teaching post of 5 hrs per week.

Low incidence hours are allocated to the school according as children with a needs/e are approved by N L S E.

Circular 24/03 and 007/2012.

It is important to note
- General Allocation is based on the number of classroom teachers in the school.
- Low incidence hours / assistance, technology/special equipment are allocated to the school and not the child.
- When pupil/pupils with low incidence disabilities leave the school, the resource hours cease to exist in the school.
- When pupil/pupils with low incidence disabilities leave the school, assistive Technology and or special equipment may be retained in the school for the use of other S.E.N.S. pupils with similar disabilities. The D.E.S. may also request the safe return of this same equipment.
- A full-time post (25hours) may revert to part-time hours when low incidence pupils leave the school unless new low incidence hours can be sanctioned for other pupils in the school.
- A full-time post for a shared position is 22 hours.
- The school will decide how resources hours will be used ie
  (a) Withdrawing small groups with similar disabilities
  (b) Withdrawing small groups in order to develop social interaction skills.
  (c) S.E.T team supporting teachers in the classroom by working with groups
  (d) Members of S.E.T. team working 1:1 in the classroom.
  (e) Pupils withdrawn from class for 1:1 tuition with a member of the S.E.T. team.
  (f) In large combination classes the S.E.T. team may withdraw a full class and have responsibility for one or more areas of the curriculum eg numeracy, literacy etc.
  (g) Where resources allow, withdrawing children in groups who are high achievers.

Differentiation
Not all students are alike
When we reach out to their individual needs within the wider group we are engaging in differentiation.
It is most helpful to think of differentiation as an approach to teaching and learning that encourages us to vary what we do in three key areas.

1. **Content –** the material we choose to present or engage pupils with.
2. **Process –** The methods and activities we use to give pupils opportunities to practice and learn the content
3. **Product –** the way pupils show us that have learned (this could include assessment) testing. Good teachers, once they have knowledge of the pupil they are teaching, will instinctively use differentiation in will instinctively use differentiation in their daily teaching.

12. Individual Educational Plan (I.E.P.s)

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (E.P.S.E.N.s)
Act –2004. This act provides the legislative basis for the introduction of Individual Educational plans (I.E.P.S.) for children with special educational needs.

Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.s) is "a restriction in the capacity of a person 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 person learning differently from a person without that condition.

In preparing an I.E.P., the principal must ensure that the parents, the local S.E.N. class teacher, S.E.T. member are consulted. The input and recommendations from local appropriate professionals eg psychologists, occupational therapist, speech & language therapist etc. will be vital

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13. National Council for Special Education (N.C.S.E.).

From Jan 1st 2005 the D.E S. has transferred its functions to the N. C.S.E. These functions relate to children with disabilities with special educational needs. Application for resource in relation to children with disability who have special education needs should now be made to the Council through the Special Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.).

Types of Applications
(a) Application for resource hours for children with low incidence disability.
(b) Application for Special Needs Assistant (S.N.A.) hours.
(c) Application for other resource eg assistive technology, special equipment etc.

With effect from January 2006 the N.C.S.E. will decide on
- Applications for resource teaching from school in meeting the S.E.N.s of children with low incidence disabilities.
- Applications for S.N.A. support in respect of all children with disabilities with S.E.N.s.

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14. The Role of the Special Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.)

Considering Applications:
In considering such applications the S.E.N.O will take into account a number of factors including
1. The S.E.N.s of the child as identified and documented in the professional assessments supporting the application.
2. The proposals from the school as to how it will meet the needs of the child.
3. The views of the parents.
4. The departmental policy on the teaching and S.N.A. supports to which the school is entitled.
5. The overall resource teaching and S.N.A. supports already available in the school to meet such needs.

Communicating of Decision:
When a decision is made the S.E.N.O will inform the principal. The principal or the principal and S.E.N.O will inform the parents as to how the S.E.N.s of the child will now be met by the school. A copy of the decision will be forwarded to the Head Office of the N.C.S.E. and also the D.E.S.

Application for Assistive Technology /Special Equipment
While S.E.N.O s are not currently responsible for deciding or applications for assistive technology/special equipment, the D.E.S. will wish to draw on the local knowledge of the S.E.N.O. as part of the decision making process. Therefore such applications should be submitted in the first instance to the S.E.N.O who will forward applications to the department with a recommendation regarding the application.
In the case of applications for special equipment for the visually on hearing impaired pupils,

The S.E.N.O will seek the recommendation of the appropriate visiting teacher before submitting the application to the department.

Applications for School Transport
Similarly, the D.E.S. will wish to draw on the local knowledge of the S.E.N.O as part of the decision-making process. The same procedure as with assertive technology applies.

S.E.N.0   John Moran
           C/o Laois Education Centre,
           Block Rd,
           Portlaoise. Tel : 057 86 82164.

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15. National Educational Psychological Services (N.E.P.S.)

N.E.P.S. was established in 1999.   It was given the authority to provide psychological services to all students who need it, both at primary and secondary schools and in other centres supported by the D.E.S.

The N.E.P.S. offers advice about individual children and may carry out psychological assessments in the school. Ballyfin N.S. based on its enrolment numbers is entitled to two of these assessments per year.

> N.E.P.S Psychologist – Mary Peelo
> Contact no. 057 87 56943.

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16. Special Needs Assistants (S.N.A.s.)

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist children with disabilities in an educational context. These duties are assigned by the Principal Teacher. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or by a class teacher. These duties involve tasks of a non-teaching nature such as :

1. Preparation and tidying up of classrooms.

2. Assisting children to board and alight from school bus or car. Where necessary to travel as escort on school buses.

3. Helping children in areas of particular difficulties eg writing, typing. assisting with clothing, feeding, toileting general hygiene etc.

4. Assisting on out of school visits, walks and similar activities.

5. Assisting the teachers on the supervision of pupils during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.

6. Accompanying individuals or small groups who have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom for one reason or another.

7. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a . non-teaching nature.

8. Engagement with parents of special needs children in both formal and informal structures as required and directed by school management.

9. S.N.A.s may be re-assigned to other work appropriate to the grade, when special needs .

pupils are absent or when urgent work demands arise.

Every adult in the school including secretaries and S.N.A.s have a duty of care to the children in school. S.N.A.s and secretaries as well as teachers must ensure that the children are safe.
With this in mind all adults have a responsibility to point out to children where the dangers are and request that the school rules are obeyed.

S.N.A.s may be asked by (teacher/S.E.T. /parents) to keep notes of care issues eg records of (health/safety /hygiene/eating/drinking. This would be important to build up a profile on a particular child. The information may help towards developing an I.E.P. for a S.E. N. child.
It needs to be put in the child's file at the end of each school year.

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17. Communication.

- Enrolment forms/medical forms
  These contain information relevant to special needs/disabilities.

- Assessments, Reports, Test results also contain valuable information re children with special needs.
- Meetings   (1) Teacher or parent may set up meeting.
      (2) Annual parent/teacher meeting. (These happen in Nov. from 3pm onwards).
      (3) S.E.T. team may set up meetings with parents, with each other or with class teacher/principal.
      (4) Class teacher/S.E.T. may set up meetings with Psychologists, occupational therapist etc.
      (5) Class teacher /S.E.T. may set up meetings with S.E.N.O.
      (6) School may set up meeting with school inspector.
      (7) S.E.N.O may set up meetings with parents, class teacher, S.E.T. psychologist etc.
      (8) Principal may set up meetings with one or all of above.

NB. A parent wishing to set up a meeting should ring the school secretary to set up an appointment with a class teacher, S.E.T. or principal.

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18. Record Keeping.

- A general file is kept on all children in the school.
- Sample tests, results, N.R.I.T, Micra -T, Sigma –T, results, and annual school reports are all kept in this file.

- Exemption from Irish - S.E.N. children and/or children with a psychological report may be granted an exemption from Irish. This exemption must be recommended in the report.
- Records of pupils' absences, records of parent/teacher meetings and decisions taken are all kept on file.
- Children with special needs/disabilities who have psychological assessments, O.T. assessments, speech and language assessments, behavioural assessments etc. are all kept in a S.E.N. file.
- Records of meetings with parents and S.E.T. team /decisions taken are kept in these files.
- The files on all children with special needs and health and medical information on all pupils are kept in secure service cabinets.
- The parents/guardians, class teacher, S.E.T. team, principal, S.E.N.O. and school inspector have access to this information.
- Class teacher, S.E.T. team, principal, class teachers, parents, psychologists, and therapists, H.S.E., S.E.N.O. General Practioner and school inspectorate, D.E.S and special needs assistants (S.N.A.s) all have a responsibility for contributing to these file.
- When children transfer from sixth class to second-level the secondary school may request copies of these files. This will only be granted after parental/guardian consent is given in writing.
- Files on all children are kept in the school until the child reaches the age of eighteen as in (Data Protection Act).

References:
Education Act 2000.
Education Welfare Act.
Education for Persons with Disability Act 2003.

Education for Persons with Special Education Needs (E.P.S.E.N.) Act.
Health and Safety Act 1989.

Circulars :
Exemption from Irish 12/96.
Application for Resource Teacher 8/99.
Allocation of Resource for pupils with S.E.N.s 24/03.
Allocation of Resource for pupils with S.E.N.s. 9/04.

Organising of Teaching Resources for pupils who need Additional Support in
Mainstream Primary Schools Cr. Sp. Ed. 02/05.

<u>Abbreviations</u>:

S.E.N	Special Education Needs.
S.E.N.O.	Special Education Needs Organiser.
N.E.P.S.	National Educational Psychologist Service.
I.E.P.	Individual Educational Plan.
S.N.A.	Special Needs Assistant.
S.E.T.	Special Education Teachers.
H.S.E.	Health Service Executive. (formerly Midland Health Board.
N.C.S.E	National Council for Special Education.
B.O.M	Board of Management .
D.E.S.	Department of Education & Science.

Concluding Comment

This policy has been amended by staff to include more specific advice on strategies for pupils at stage one of the continuum of support and on the schools approach to early intervention.

This policy may be altered, revised or updated at a future date so as to comply with any changes kin conditions. All amendments and updates will be recorded in the -

Special Needs Policy.

Signed: P. B. Hennessy   Date: 8th October 2012.

Special Needs Policy

(Amended Sept. 2012)

List of Appendices

- **Appendix A :   Screening and Checklists**

- **Appendix B : If …… then chart for Literacy Skills (including strategies to support instructions).**

- **Appendix C :   Phonics + Phonological Awareness Strategies.**

- **Appendix D :   Predictable Pattern.**

- **Appendix E :   Template for Reading Strategies.**

- **Appendix F :   List of Concept Books.**