



Scoil Mhuire Allenwood
Allenwood
Naas
Co. Kildare

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Introductory Statement

Scoil Mhuire, Allenwood is a rural mixed school under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. This policy was originally drafted in 2017 and updated in December 2023.

Policy Rationale

This policy was formulated to meet the varying needs of our school community. The policy aims to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents, guardians and other interested parties on the provision of effective support to pupils experiencing learning and behavioural difficulties as well as to fulfil our obligations under:

- The Education Act (1998)
- The Education Welfare Act (2000)
- The Equal Status Act (2000)
- Disability Bill (2002)
- E.P.S.E.N Act (2004) Circular 2017

This policy takes into account the guidelines issued by the DES and the NCSE with the introduction in 2017 of the new model to support pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Relationship to School Ethos

Scoil Mhuire is dedicated to creating a happy, secure, inclusive and nurturing environment where all members of the school community can grow, develop and achieve their full potential. In doing this, the school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, and the enhancement of teaching processes. This policy supports the school ethos by providing a framework for pupils to receive early, targeted intervention, thereby helping children overcome any barriers they may face with regards to their education. We aspire to create an inclusive atmosphere which values each member of the school community for the contribution they make to school life.

Aims and Objectives

- To enable pupils of all abilities to benefit from an appropriate education.
- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
- To promote positive working partnerships between parents and teachers to aid children's education.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- To outline communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs,

Those with the highest level of need should have the greatest level of support (2017 guidelines p19)

1. Pupils with significant and enduring complex needs as defined by the DES who continue to experience significant difficulties for example:
 Profound visual impairment, Profound hearing impairment, Severe emotional disturbances, Severe language disorders/delays, Severe physical disabilities, Assessed syndromes, Moderate G.L.D., ASD moderate
2. Pupils with mild general learning disabilities.
3. Early Intervention: In class support based on the priority learning needs of the class (Literacy, Numeracy, Language)
4. Pupils who have a language deficit due to English as an additional language which is impacting on their progress in Literacy/Numeracy
5. Pupils scoring at/ below a STEN of 4 on standardised assessments in Literacy or Mathematics
6. Pupils experiencing moderate/serious difficulties with oral language/social interaction/behavioural or emotional development.
7. Short Term interventions for unexpected situations through illness, absence or trauma.

The level of support may change based on the child's needs and progress irrespective of their placement on the hierarchy of needs.

The school will initiate the staged approach to intervention as per circulars 24/03 and 02/05.

Three steps for Implementation of a Continuum of Support for Pupils with Special Educational Needs:

Step 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process	
Classroom Support - Stage 1	<p><i>Classroom support is the most common and typically the first response to emerging needs. The class teacher considers how to differentiate effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</i></p> <p><i>A classroom support plan using the 'Student Support File' template on Aladdin is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This involves parental consultation. This plan may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Teacher observation records</i> <i>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</i> <i>• Basic needs checklist</i> <i>• Learning environment checklist</i> <i>• Pupil consultation – 'My Thoughts About School' Checklist</i> <i>• Literacy and numeracy tests</i> <p><i>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</i></p>
<p><i>If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may be consulted about the desirability of a move to Stage 2</i></p>	
School Support - Stage 2	<p><i>At this level a support plan is devised, again, using the 'Student Support File' template on Aladdin. The class teacher needs to involve the SET teacher in the problem solving process at this point. This plan may include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Teacher observation records/teacher-designed measures/assessments</i> <i>• Parent and pupil interviews</i> <i>• Learning environment checklist</i> <i>• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy (Dyslexia Portfolio, Drumcondra Spelling, CAT 4 etc)</i> <i>• Formal observation of behaviour (eg ABC charts/frequency measures)</i> <i>• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</i> <p><i>A support plan at this level may include team-teaching/ small groups/ individual tuition. It operates for an agreed period of time and is reviewed.</i></p>
<p><i>If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3</i></p>	

**School
Support
Plus -
Stage 3**

If pupils special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support and a school support plus plan. 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 (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*
- *Reports from Psychologists/Occupational therapists, Speech and Language Therapists, etc. where applicable.*

Based on Psychologist's report, tests, and School Support Plan the class teacher with the support teacher, parents and representatives of outside agencies (if necessary) formulate a School Support Plus Plan as part of the Student Support File. This involves a small-steps approach, breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded targets to 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,*
- *goals which the child is to achieve over a period of half a year.*

The strategies set out in the plan will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting. The management of these strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher, SET teacher.

Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.

Step 2: Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs

We will 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. The Staged Approach as outlined above will be utilised. See also the six point 'Action Plan' (Taken from Primary Guidelines, P19-20) detailed in Appendix 3:

Step 3: Monitoring and Reviewing Outcomes:

We will review and record progress and plan for the next steps in pupils' learning. Focus will be on support plans that are clear, useful and easy to interpret. Outcomes can be reviewed at individual, group, class and whole school level. The Principal and Special Education Teachers will meet periodically to discuss issues such as:

- Implementation of the school's early intervention programme;
- Screening programmes for selection of pupils for diagnostic assessment;
- Progress of pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching;
- Referral of pupils for additional assessment and support, etc

Time is set aside on Friday afternoons to facilitate communication between the Special Education Teachers and the Class Teacher/Principal/Parents on the progress of pupils.

Review of Support Plans

- The support plan will be completed in October. The review is conducted in February. The class teacher consults with the support teacher, the parents (and SNA if appointed). They agree on the expected outcomes of the plan. A draft copy is formulated and 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 Student Support File.
- Where progress is unsatisfactory it may be decided that the child continues to receive additional support. If progress is satisfactory, and the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision will be made to revert to the previous level of support.
- Information from the review will be used to formulate an updated Support plan, which will be part of the plan for the next teacher in September.

Roles and Responsibilities:

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, principal, class teacher, special education teacher and parents. 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.

Role of 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 primary responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes and should ensure that they plan lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.** This will include adapting teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. Mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These might include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation

- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Co-ordinating with SET to provide blocks of In-Class Support in lieu of withdrawing pupils for support
- Embedding ICT in teaching, learning and assessment
- Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum, 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 by:
 - Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons and adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests, abilities and needs
 - Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
 - Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly
 - Using a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies-eg active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

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, 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 individual strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary. This may take the form of:

- curriculum support
- life and/or social skills training, work on developing positive self esteem
- preparation for transitioning to Secondary Level School in senior classes
- physical training/gross motor development/fine 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 continuum of support plan. Short-term planning should reflect the support plan targets. Outcomes for pupils should be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress and should also inform future targets. 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.

Role of Parents

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. 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.

Parents 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, practising aspects of Mathematics such as telling the time, weighing and measuring, money, etc, with their child
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading, tables, spellings
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing outcomes with the teacher/s.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding support teaching.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Attending meetings and keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Visiting library, museums, art galleries, exhibitions, etc with their child
- Helping child to develop organisational skills and to look after school resources
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the 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. Assessment is administered at the end of Junior Infants. The Drumcondra Early Literacy Test is administered to all pupils at the end of Senior Infants. Pupils who present with lower scores are selected for extra group work with the SET. This may be facilitated as an in-class group or the group may be withdrawn to focus on an aspect of literacy such as Phonics, Paired Reading, Comprehension, etc.

Observation and/or assessment:

Observation/assessment methods could take the form of: personal checklists, record sheet with name of each child, shared observation (2nd opinion), listening to reading, general correction of homework, reading records, questioning, paired reading, teacher's own observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, portfolios-samples of written work, project work, children's self-assessment- use of smiley faces etc. as well as a range of Standardised Tests for example- MICRA T, SIGMA T, Drumcondra Reading and Spelling tests, Drumcondra Early literacy and numeracy screening tests, NRIT, etc and diagnostic tests for example- Dyslexia Portfolio Assessment, BIAP, Schonell Reading/Decoding/Spelling tests etc.

Procedure for Continuing/Discontinuing Support

At the end of a term or following Standardised Testing, a decision can be made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching for pupils who receive support. Criteria on which this decision is based might include:

- Successful achievement of learning targets
- Whether or not the child can cope independently or semi-independently in the classroom learning context
- Results of assessments and diagnostic tests

The decision involves consultation between the class teacher and Special Education Teacher. Account is also taken of the overall learning support demands throughout the school. If a pupil will no longer be in receipt of support, parents will be informed.

Timetabling

- Provision of SET Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Mathematics.

- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend Learning Support/Resource Class. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher so as to minimise class disruption.
- The provision of Learning Support/Resource Teaching may include withdrawal of pupil(s) from their classroom and/or in-class tuition and early intervention strategies.
- In-Class Support, will be jointly planned and monitored by the Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher(s)

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 'Education For Persons with Special Educational Needs Act', 2004 states that:

'A child with SEN shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the degree or nature of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with-

(a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or

(b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated'

No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN.

Parents/guardians of children with SEN will be asked to provide relevant medical/psychological reports so that the Board of Management can seek access to the necessary resources before the child is accepted.

Parents/Guardians will meet the principal and the SEN co-ordinator and draw up a needs profile for the child, taking account of issues such as access, mobility, toileting, supervision, administration of medicines, safety, assistive technology, transport, etc. Supports will be accessed from NCSE as appropriate.

The Exceptionally Able Student:

At Scoil Mhuire, we are committed to providing an environment which encourages all pupils to maximise their potential. We strive to provide learning opportunities for all abilities across a range of curriculum areas so that talents can be nurtured in many areas of school life. Work can be differentiated (in terms of pace, resources, task, support, dialogue, etc) so as to facilitate the needs of exceptionally able students. The use of ICT and In-Class Support can also provide scope for students to work at a pace appropriate to their abilities. Information can be accessed through the school regarding outside agencies that also cater for the needs of children with exceptional ability.

Preparation for Transfer/Transition to Post Primary School:

It is the duty of the Parents/Guardians of the pupil to inform the Post-Primary School of their child's needs. In May/June each year, staff from the local Post-Primary School liaise with the Principal, the 6th Class Teacher and the SEN co-ordinator regarding the needs of the pupils. The pupil's School Passport transitions with the child to second level. It is sometimes recommended that a child, accompanied by his/her parents, might do an orientation visit to the new school during the summer holidays in order to become familiar with the new surroundings in advance of the new school term. Where appropriate, the SEN teacher will periodically arrange blocks of 'Social Classes' for small groups of children, usually from 4th to 6th Classes to cover topics such as Self Esteem, Use of Lockers, Timetables, Making New Friends and Joining in, Conversations, Study Routines, etc in preparation for transition. In some cases advice may be sought from other professionals regarding the transition of pupils with SEN.

The New SEN Model:

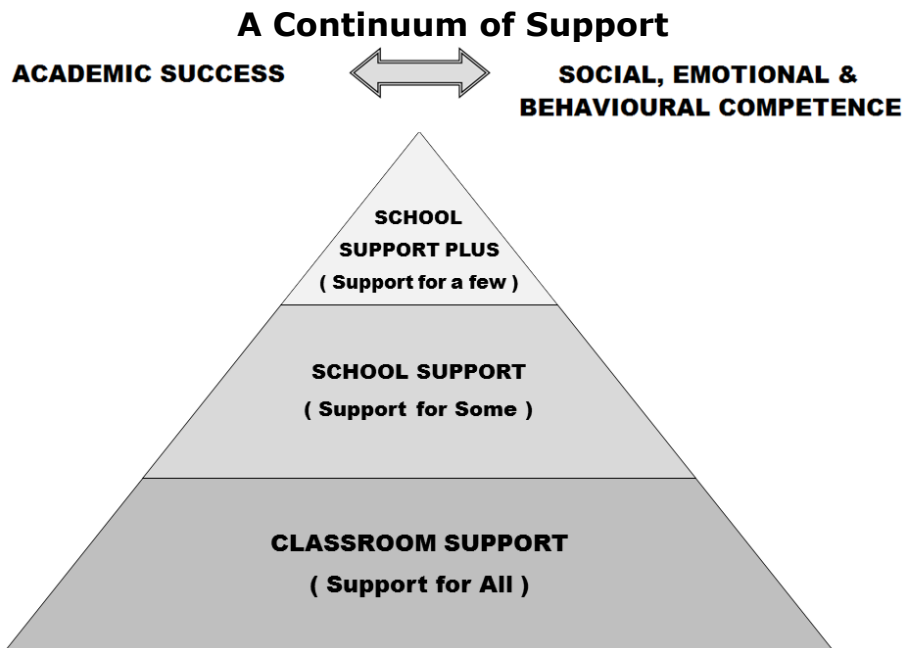
Schools decide how additional teaching supports are deployed so as to facilitate inclusion and cater for all students requiring additional support. The deployment of resources is based on pupils' identified needs and is informed by regular reviews of their progress, in consultation with their parents and external professional bodies where applicable. Procedures for identification of pupils for additional support have been outlined above.

Other related policies

The Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Irish Exemption and Assessment policies are particularly relevant to children with SEN and the policies established should reflect this.

Appendix 1

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



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

Date	Actions

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:

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 3:

<p>Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs</p>	<p>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 (eg, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests). Identify pupils with special educational needs and match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
<p>Action 2: Setting targets</p>	<p>Based on needs, set clear learning targets for pupils/groups of pupils at each level of the continuum of support using the 'Student Support File' template.</p>
<p>Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches</p>	<p>Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for pupils 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.</p>
<p>Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes</p>	<p>Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.</p>
<p>Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress</p>	<p>Ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.

Appendix 4: 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

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

Policy was updated in January 2024 _____

Ratified by the Board of Management on / /

Signatures:

1. _____

Chairperson

2. _____

Principal