

CENTRAL MODEL SENIOR SCHOOL

Special Education Policy (2019)

Introduction

Under the new General Allocation Model, from September 2017 – June 2019, Central Model Senior School has an allocation of 87.5 hours of support teaching to meet the needs of the children in the school. We have three Learning Support /Resource teachers (now known as Special Education Needs teachers) and one English as an Additional Language Teacher. We have three full time SNAs. We share a Support Teacher with Central Model Infants' School. We share a Home School Community Liaison Teacher with Central Model Infants' School and Scoil Chaoimín.

Changes to the previous policy arise from

- The introduction of the new General Allocation Model
- Changes in our practice in recent years with a greater focus on in-class/whole-class support and a reduction in withdrawing children for learning support.
- An increase in social/emotional difficulties among pupils.
- Our ongoing commitment to ensuring that pupils experiencing learning/social/emotional difficulties receive the support that they need insofar as we can provide it

In November 2017, the SET team undertook preparation for the introduction of the new model.

This involved

- Broadly timetabling projected interventions for 2017/18/19.
- Looking at the needs of those children who had resource hours under the previous model to ensure that their needs would continue to be met under the terms of our current provision.
- Collating the information provided by class teachers, as well as the standardized test results to insure that children who will need interventions outside those that can be provided in class, have their needs met under the Continuum of Support.

All class teachers were consulted prior to the proposed changes.

It was agreed that this meeting would take place at the start of every academic year.

Classroom Resources:

The school has three learning support rooms, in the large prefab which is shared by the SET. The 'Rainbow Room' is used for emotional/behavioural support and is located in the main building.

Aims of SEN Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.

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 these 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

As such we seek to comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000) and 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).

Guiding Principles of SEN Policy:

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

Inclusion:

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document, aims to enable children with SEN to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

The following practical steps are in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included as fully as possible in the life of the school and the classroom:

- Educational outings
- School tours
- SPHE classes
- Paired/ Shared Reading/etc
- Drama
- P.E.
- Visual Art
- Swimming
- SESE – where appropriate.
- Restorative Practice

Procedure for identification / screening / referral of Special Needs children from within the school.

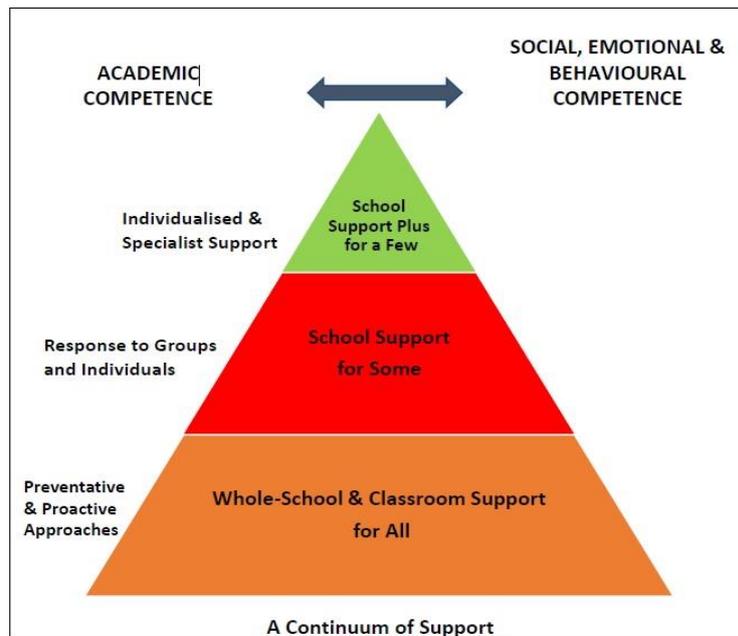
- Sigma-T and Micra-T or Drumcondra Tests are carried out annually.
- From this information, the class teachers and the SEN Team decide the appropriate level of intervention required and if educational assessment by a psychologist is necessary.
- The standardised test results are stored on Aladdin.
- The Principal stores all psychological assessment reports.
- Parent-Teacher meetings are held annually.
- Informal contact is maintained between parents and teachers particularly when it is found that a child may have special needs.
- School Support Plan meetings are held 2 or 3 times a year. Parents, the class teacher and SEN teacher and other professionals are invited to attend.

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:

The flow diagrams outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be found in the Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers 12 - 35

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf



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, SET 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.

Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Basic needs checklist • Learning environment checklist • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
--------------------------	--

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.

School Support

At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:

- Teacher observation records
- Teacher-designed measures/assessments
- Parent and pupil interviews
- Learning environment checklist
- Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy
- Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures
- Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties

A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.

A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

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. Where a pupil has a diagnosis/report from an outside agency, recommendations in the report will be considered in deciding what supports are offered. However, within the school, we may not always be able to offer the supports recommended. Also, we may not always feel that the recommendations are borne out by the evidence we have regarding a pupil. We retain the right to offer what we feel is the most appropriate intervention for each pupil, taking into account evidence from teachers, parents and any other agencies that may be involved. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of any intervention.

School Support Plus	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 <p>Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>
----------------------------	---

Information Gathering and Assessment

Class & the SET team will use their observations, class tests, standardized and diagnostic tests, parental input and reports from professionals involved with the child to create a list that includes every child in the class. It will record children who are not on the support continuum as well as those at stages 1, 2, 3. (See template). This list should be updated at regular intervals and presented to the SET team so that they have it for their reviews. These reviews take place

1. In June and start of school year
2. Before Christmas
3. At commencement of the final term.

However, if a child presents with a more pressing concern, their needs may be addressed at any time.

A useful step in identifying pupils who may need learning support in English or Mathematics is for the class teacher (with the help of the SET) to administer one or more screening measures. The screening measures that are administered depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils concerned but the following will be administered annually:

- Reading and Maths tests (Drumcondra) will be used in 2nd, 3rd and 4th class. These will be carried out in May each year.
- Sigma-T and Micra-T will be used in 5th and 6th class to assess English and Maths. These will be carried out in May each year. However, by 2021 all classes will be using Drumcondra Reading and Maths tests.
- The NNRIT test will be carried out annually in 2nd class and biennially from 3rd class onwards. (End of January)
- The NVRT test will be carried out annually in 2nd class and biennially from 3rd class onwards. (End of January)

In mathematics we focus on language development and development of mathematical procedures and concepts.

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.

Sometimes children may be included for support based on a teacher's experience and insight or where there are exceptional circumstances such as difficult home circumstances, ongoing poor performance not flagged in standardised tests, difficulties with processing etc.

Implementation

This policy will be fully implemented by _____.

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the **6th February 2019** and communicated to parents thereafter.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in **January 2022** and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.