

Polasaí ar Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais

*Policy for Special Educational
Needs*

Gaelscoil Uí Néill



‘Fonn a dhéanann foghlaim’

Mission Statement

We, the staff of Gaelscoil Uí Néill, strive to ensure the realisation of our School Mission Statement. We are firmly committed to the education of all children in the school and to an inclusive ethos through which we aim to meet the needs of individual children so that all children in the school may reach their full potential and become contributing members of our society. Children on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Register are fully integrated into their class group and in the school as a whole.

This idea can best be achieved through involving pupils and through the collaboration between parents, teachers and outside agencies. We aim to do this within a warm and caring environment.

Staff are further guided by the following aims:

- That each child will work to their full potential in a bilingual environment where learning is an enjoyable experience and where teachers use an appropriate range of strategies and resources, including ICT, that are suited to the children's learning styles.
- That each child is encouraged to be self-disciplined, self-motivated and independent.
- That each child's self-confidence and self-esteem is developed and safeguarded.
- That each child feels safe, valued and respected.
- That positive relationships are encouraged at every level, with open channels of communication so that a consistent learning environment is provided for the child.
- By virtue of its Christian ethos, Gaelscoil Uí Néill, under the leadership of the Principal and staff, shows no distinction between peoples of different gender, race, religion, cultural background, mental or physical disability.
- Full learning opportunities are open to all pupils and children are nurtured in self-respect and respect for all peoples.

We have, in Gaelscoil Uí Néill, a dedicated staff of teachers and ancillary personnel who have a strong sense of loyalty to our school and who work untiringly for the good of all the children. We strive to address the distinctive learning characteristics of each and every child, so as to ensure optimum provision for any child who requires additional support in any aspect or indeed for any child who requires extension or increased challenge.

The pupils show a healthy sense of belonging to the school community. They recognise the importance of high standards of work, behaviour and courtesy. Pupils are encouraged to value one another and express their own views while appreciating the views of others.

Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the work of their children and are given many opportunities to participate in the life of the school.

The school is proud to display the high standard of children's work in the corridors and classrooms. This creates a stimulating environment for all staff and children.

Special Educational Needs – A Definition

A child has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty that calls for special educational provision to be made for him/her. A child has a learning difficulty if he or she:

- a) has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children the same age;
- b) has a disability that either prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of the kind provided for children of the same age in mainstream schooling;
- c) is under five years of age and falls within the definition of a) or b) above or would do so if special education provision was not made for the child.

Disability – A Definition

A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day tasks.

This definition covers pupils with physical (including sensory), intellectual or mental impairments. The definition is broad and might include children with a learning disability, sensory impairment, severe dyslexia, diabetes or epilepsy, pupils who are incontinent or who have AIDS, severe disfigurement or progressive conditions like muscular dystrophy.

Many children who have SEN will also be defined as being disabled. However, not all children who are defined as being disabled will have SEN.

Special Educational Needs Provision

Special educational provision means educational provision that is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally to children of this age in mainstream schools.

Gaelscoil Uí Néill aims to enable children to access a broad and balanced curriculum within a mainstream Irish-medium setting. All members of the teaching staff are involved in the provision for SEN and in the implementation of the SEN policy, with the Principal having an overview.

Objectives

The policy objectives are:

- to identify children with SEN as early as possible and to provide a learning environment within an Irish-medium context, that is sensitive to their needs;
- to provide an appropriate range of strategies and resources for teaching, learning and assessing, suitably differentiated as appropriate;
- to monitor progress so as to ensure that provision is effective;
- to work in partnership with pupils, staff, parents and governors and external agencies in order to enhance the learning opportunities of the children;
- to encourage children to respect and value one another regardless of their academic ability;
- to encourage children to work to their full potential in all areas of the curriculum
- to adhere to the spirit of the Code of Practice for Special Needs.

The Role of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors are responsible for:

- determining and reviewing the school's policy and approach in relation to the provision of education for children with Special Educational Needs (in conjunction with the Principal)
- establishing appropriate staffing and funding arrangements (in conjunction with the Principal)
- reporting annually to parents on the implementation of the school's SEN policy.

The Role of the Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- the day-to-day management of all the school's work, including its management of special needs
- keeping the Board of Governors informed of all relevant issues relating to special needs within the school;
- working closely with the SEN co-ordinator.

The Role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is responsible for:

- the day-to-day operation of the school's SEN policy;
- liaising with and advising teachers;
- co-ordinating provision for the children with SEN (in class or withdrawal)

- maintaining the school's SEN Register and overseeing the records on all pupils with SEN;
- liaising with parents;
- contributing to in-service training of staff;
- attending training courses to meet own needs;
- liaising with external agencies;
- assessment, information gathering and assisting teachers in drawing up education plans;
- review and statementing procedures;
- managing resources for SEN (including SEN classroom assistants);
- reporting on a regular basis to the Principal.

The Role of the Class Teacher

The class teacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day teaching of all the children;
- the assessment of the pupils and the use of one's own professional opinion in order to identify children with SEN;
- the completion and implementation of Records of Concern and Action Plan pro forma for children who have been identified as having SEN;
- in conjunction with the SENCO and Special Needs Teacher (if appropriate), to draw up, implement and review Education Plans for children with SEN;
- to work with all parties to ensure the adequate provision for children with SEN;
- the co-ordination of classroom assistants who assist children with SEN.

Admission Arrangements

The admission arrangements with respect to the majority of pupils with special educational needs are consistent with the school's general arrangements for all other pupils. Children with statements of special educational needs are placed in schools at the request of the Education and Library Board. When seeking to place a pupil with a statement, the Board will take into account the wishes of the parents and the provision of efficient education for other children in the class or the school.

SEN Specialism

When able, the school employs a reading-support teacher who withdraws children in order to provide support for children on the SEN Register for whom it is deemed necessary. Standardised and diagnostic tests are administered to assess the children and to establish who requires additional support. Test

results are used to list the children according to their needs and are used to assist with withdrawal arrangements.

Special Facilities, Resources and Accommodation

The Principal's office is made available to the reading support teacher each day, with suitable group seating arrangements. A confidential filing cabinet is located and is sufficient storage space for materials and resources.

The school is fully accessible to wheelchair users and has facilities for personal care, including a toilet for the disabled.

A Whole-School Approach

To ensure a whole school approach:

1. the class teacher is responsible for meeting all the needs of all the children in his/her class and the day-to-day identifying and monitoring of SEN pupils;
2. the Principal, SENCO and staff will liaise regularly for consultation and information sharing including:
 - support for the class teacher;
 - withdrawal or in-class support for the individuals concerned;
 - appropriate arrangements for statemented children.

Assessment, Identification and Provision

The assessment and identification of children with special needs is the responsibility of each class teacher using observations, experience, professional judgement and testing. Each teacher is aware of the importance of early identification so that intervention procedures are put into place as soon as possible. Teachers complete an Initial Record of Concern form and formulate an Action Plan when they are concerned about a pupil, these are discussed with the Principal and SENCO. The parents are then informed that the child's name has been added to the Register and they will sign the Record of Concern form.

We acknowledge that SEN could arise as a result of academic, physical, medical or severe emotional and behaviour difficulties, and could be of a temporary nature. In Gaelscoil Uí Néill, we adopt procedures for a staged approach as outlined in the following model in accordance with the NI Code of Practice. Class teachers provide an Action Plan for differentiated work at Stage 1 and education plans for children at Stage 2 and above. If a child has

not made significant progress at Stage 2, a decision will be made as to whether he/she should be referred to an educational psychologist for assessment. This is done after consultation with and the approval of the child's parents.

Stage 1	The class teacher identify or register a child's special educational needs and, in consultation with the school's SENCO, takes appropriate action, i.e. filling in Record of Concern form and formulation of Action Plan.
Stage 2	The SENCO, the class teacher and the Special Needs Teacher collaborate to gather information and to co-ordinate the child's special educational provision, i.e. the formulation, implementation and review of Individual Education Plan (IEP).
Stage 3	Teacher and SENCO are supported by a specialist from outside the school, i.e. referral to educational psychologist.
Stage 4	ELB considers the need for statutory assessment and, if necessary, makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.
Stage 5	ELB considers the need for a statement for special educational needs and, if appropriate makes a statement and arranges , monitors and reviews provision.

Every effort is made to ensure that children experiencing learning difficulties are identified at the earliest possible time. Pupils will be placed on the school's Special Needs Register when the criteria set out below have been satisfied:

- Baseline assessment is carried out in June before entrance to Rang 1 and this is used to inform the teachers about the children's capabilities;
- Formative and summative assessment methods are used in all classes and the class teacher raises any concerns with the SENCO, Principal and parents;
- The learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties of the child have been appraised and recorded by the class teacher who may request that a child may be placed on the Register;
- The parents have been informed and, as a result, the pupil's name may or may not be placed on the Register;
- The decision to place a child on the Register is consistent with the guidelines provided by the Code of Practice;
- Placement on the register is subject to approval by the SENCO and is kept under regular review;
- The SEN Register is updated as and when required.

The agreed criteria for additional support depends on the relative needs of the pupils.

Screening Tests

Year Group	Tests	Other Assessment
P1	Próifíl Mheasúnaithe na Luathchumarsáide	Baseline Assessment Observations/Record keeping Levelling
P2	Próifíl Mheasúnaithe na Luathchumarsáide	Baseline Assessment Observations/Record keeping Levelling
P3	Drumcondra Irish Test Progress in Maths Miscue Analysis	Record keeping Regular informal assessments Levelling
P4	Drumcondra Irish Test Progress in Maths GL Mental Maths Hodder Group Reading Progress in English New NNRIT	Record keeping Regular informal assessments Levelling
P5	Drumcondra Irish Test Progress in Maths GL Mental Maths Suffolk Reading Test Progress in English	Record keeping Regular informal assessments Levelling
P6	Drumcondra Irish Test Progress in Maths GL Mental Maths Suffolk Reading Test Progress in English CAT4	Record keeping Regular informal assessments Levelling
P7	Drumcondra Irish Test Progress in Maths GL Mental Maths Suffolk Reading Test Progress in English	Record keeping Regular informal assessments Levelling

Review Procedures

When children who have been identified as having special educational needs are placed on the Register, their progress will be monitored by the class teacher and reviewed at the end of the time allocated for each IEP by the class teacher, SENCO, in consultation with the parents and the child, where appropriate. At least two IEPs are provided each academic year with targets specifically directed towards the child's needs. Time is allocated to all staff to discuss identification, provision, monitoring, review or resources for SEN.

An IEP sets out the nature of the child's learning difficulty, the stage of the child (i.e. Stage 1, 2 or 3 etc) the special provision required, the nature of parental support, the specific targets to be achieved in a given time, any medical or pastoral arrangements, review arrangements, date, teacher's name, year group and IEP number.

Each plan is evaluated on completion with contributions from the pupils, parents and outside agencies where appropriate, and is used to guide future planning. The success of the plan is evaluated by measuring progress made against specific targets and the SENCO and the class teacher decide whether or not to move the child up or down through the stages.

If satisfactory progress is made, the SENCO and class teacher decide if the pupil no longer needs additional help. If so, the child's name will be removed from the SEN Register, with the parent's full knowledge.

Annual Review for Statemented Pupils

Children with statements of SEN will, in addition to education plan reviews, have an annual review. The annual review is carried out by the school on behalf of the ELB to consider whether the objectives of statements and the special educational provision are still appropriate.

Curriculum Access, Breadth and Balance

All children receive a broad and balanced curriculum, relevant to the needs of the individual. Access to the curriculum is facilitated by whatever means necessary in order to ensure that success is achieved. All teachers endeavour to set suitable learning challenges, respond to the pupils' diverse learning needs and to overcome potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

As far as possible, special educational provision is made in normal classroom settings where children experience learning across the breadth of the curriculum in whole-class groups, ability groups, mixed ability groups and through individual teaching.

Some provision may take the form of additional teaching support in the classroom or through withdrawal for special tuition. When this happens, support staff work closely with class teachers, following agreed programmes of work.

Inclusion

The needs of pupils with SEN are reflected in planning and teachers are encouraged to provide for all abilities within the classroom context. Time is allocated regularly to facilitate meetings between SENCO, the support teacher, class teachers and outside agencies.

Each teacher uses a variety of differentiation methods, these include:

- by task
- by input
- by outcome
- by using different texts/resources
- by using classroom assistants under the guidance of the classroom teacher
- by using a variety of teaching strategies and taking cognisance of individual learning styles

Pupils also avail of tuition from the ELB's peripatetic service. Provision is made for withdrawal to facilitate this.

Parental Involvement

We recognise that the education of pupils with SEN is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents/guardians and the children themselves. We aim to foster the active participation and involvement of parents. Parents are always informed of any additional or different provision being given and are invited to attend any reviews. Parents meet with teachers to discuss targets and review progress at the beginning of each IEP. Parents sign a copy of the IEP and a copy of the plan is made available for parents if requested. Where a parent cannot attend a meeting, the class teacher will make every effort, with at least two phone calls and a letter, to arrange a meeting. Should a parent prove unable to attend a meeting, they may alternatively express any views or comments they may have on an appropriate reply slip. A copy of the IEP may be sent home if a parent fails to attend a meeting, in an attempt to inform and gain a signature.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they wish to discuss any concerns regarding their child's needs. This should be done in the following way:

1. First contact – Class Teacher
2. Second contact – the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
3. Third contact – Principal
4. Fourth contact – Governor on the Board of Governors with responsibility for Special Needs
5. Fifth contact – Chairman of the Board of Governors

Pupil Participation

We believe in the involvement of the child and in the importance of taking their views into account. We make every effort to involve the child in the decision-making process about their special education provision.

In-service Training

Through regular consultation with the SENCO and staff, the Principal will highlight SEN areas to be developed within the school year and will facilitate training through PRSD procedures.

Liaising with Outside Agencies

Gaelscoil Uí Néill has established links with a range of outside agencies. These include:

- Educational Psychology Service
- Peripatetic Service
- CASS service
- Speech Therapist
- ELB medical service
- DENI Inspectorate
- Physiotherapy Service
- Occupational Therapy Service

Allocation of Resources for Pupils with SEN

Class teachers have a range of resources that are suitable, or which can be adapted for children with SEN. Resources currently in the school include:

- computers and C2K software
- printers
- a range of ICT devices
- reading scheme (Wellington Square)
- range of phonic materials – charts, workbooks, games
- a range of 'in-house' produced resources in Irish, games, cards, books
- concrete materials to develop language skills
- an extended range of reading materials
- multi-sensory workbooks

The resources are shared throughout the school and are reviewed and updated by the staff. The SENCO consults with staff at all times when purchasing new SEN resources. All teaching staff are aware of the Good Practice Guidelines (for schools to meet the Special Educational Needs of pupils at the school based stages of the code of practice) and the Special Educational Need Resource File (to support children with Special Educational Needs).

Evaluation and Review of Special Educational Needs Policy

Gaelscoil Uí Néill continually reviews and reports on the effectiveness of the policy. This includes the number of pupils identified, their progress, materials and equipment, resource allocation, liaison with outside agencies, details of the staff's continual professional development and the priorities in the current year and beyond.

The Board of Governors has a duty to report to parents on the implementation of the school's policy for pupils with SEN.

We at Gaelscoil Uí Néill will continue to review and update our SEN policy in light of future educational developments and the changing circumstances within the school.