

# Special Education Needs Policy



Scoil Mhuire Gleann A'Chaisil

## Glencastle National School

### 2023

(Roll Number:13222P)

## **Language Statement**

There is no universally agreed consensus on which terminology to use in relation to disability. However, our school has decided to use person-first language placing a reference to the person before the reference to the disability, with the exception of Autistic children as recommended by ASIAM (2019). It is important that we acknowledge individual preferences by communicating with parents and individuals using their preferred terms.

## **Introductory Statement**

This Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy of Glencastle National School was discussed and agreed upon by the staff of this school in August 2023. This policy is under constant review, taking into account changes in relation to the education of pupils with additional needs. Glencastle National School is a co-educational mainstream primary school with attached Multiple Classes, an Early Intervention Autism Class, and an Autism Class, Our school continues to be committed to inclusion for all since the opening of our Special Class in 1991. This SEN provision has been further developed by the addition of an Autism Class in 2016 and an Early Intervention Class in 2020.

## **Rationale**

The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance to all staff, parents, and other interested parties on the procedures in place for the identification of concerns about learning development and those with additional needs of pupils. In addition, we hope to set out clear guidelines regarding the provision of supported learning to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties.

The school currently employs three Special Class teachers. A Special Education Teacher (SET) in situ, a shared/visiting SET, and eight Special Needs Assistants (SNAs).

## **Relationship to the Ethos of the School**

Glencastle National School aims to provide a holistic approach to education taking account of individual needs, abilities, interests, and social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. We strive to create a welcoming, respectful, positive caring, an inclusive environment conducive to learning, enabling each child to reach their full potential with confidence and enthusiasm. We promote an atmosphere where staff and pupils respect themselves and others and where each person takes responsibility for their actions.

## **Definition of Special Needs:**

*“A restriction in the capacity of the 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.”*

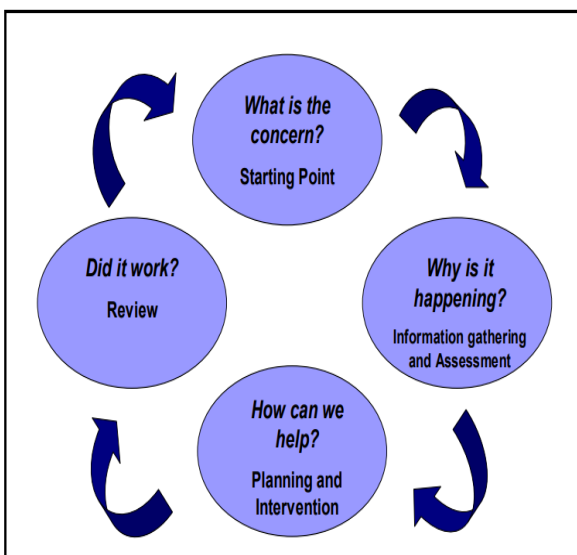
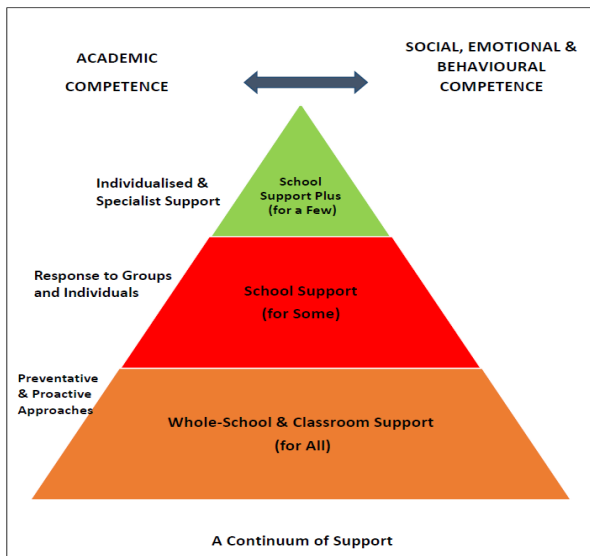
*(Government of Ireland, 2004b, section 1)*

**Aims:**

Through the implementation of this policy, using guidelines from The Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Educational Welfare Act 2000, Education with Persons Act 2005, and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004, we aim to:

- Ensure all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have the opportunity of access to an appropriate education.
- Outline our whole school approach and best practices for teaching and learning in relation to pupils with additional educational needs.
- Set out procedures for the enrolment of children with additional needs in the school.
- Assist Parents/Guardians in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Establish positive and effective communication and collaboration structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with additional educational needs.
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning among pupils with additional educational needs (Assessment for Learning (AFL) and Assessment of Learning (AOL))
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
  - Monitor early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning opportunities for children with additional educational needs.
  - Implement the Continuum of Support Model on a whole school basis

## The Continuum of Support Framework - Criteria for SEN Access



Glencastle National School aims to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve their full potential. In order to do this, the school uses the **'Continuum of Support Framework'** a process to identify the educational needs of pupils. Identification of educational needs is central to setting suitable and Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. (SMART) learning challenges for our pupils with additional educational needs. Using the Continuum of Support Framework, our school will identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social, emotional, and behavioural needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language, and communication difficulties. It is important to look at pupils' needs in context and to use our human and educational resources to support this (e.g.: the learning environment checklist, and teacher checklist for whole-class structures and supports).

Principles of Universal Design for Learning are applied to support all pupils in Table 1:

**Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process**

<p><b>Classroom Support</b></p>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental consultation</li> <li>• Teacher observation records</li> <li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>• Basic needs checklist</li> <li>• Learning environment checklist</li> <li>• Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills</li> </ul> <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time is subject to review and is signed by all parties</p>
<p><b>School Support</b></p>	<p>The SEN teacher in consultation with the class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of the pupil under review. At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation records</li> <li>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li> <li>• Learning environment checklist</li> <li>• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures</li> <li>• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</li> <li>• Classroom Support File 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 and is signed by all parties (support teacher, class teacher, parents.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>School Support Plus</b></p>	<p>The SEN teacher in consultation with the class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of the pupil under review. This level of the continuum is informed</p>

	<p>by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, and reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures</li> <li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li> <li>• Functional assessment (psychological, educational, occupational, speech, and language...)</li> <li>• Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional, and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning, etc. Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, to include longer-term planning and consultation, and is signed by all parties (SET, Class Teacher, parents.)</li> </ul>
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When meeting children’s diverse needs and for best practice, we 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. In planning interventions. **Table 2** outlines *The Six-Point Action Plan*

**Table 2: The Six-Point Action Plan**

Action 1: Identification of pupils with additional educational needs	<p>Review existing information on pupils’ needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals.</p> <p>Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, and diagnostic tests).</p> <p>Identify all pupils with additional educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
Action 2: Setting targets	<p>Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support.</p>
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	<p>Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support. Schools should consider</p>

	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.
Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify the time needed and staffing commitment required.
Action 5: Organising and deploying additional education teaching resource	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, where possible.
Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress	Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers</li> <li>• At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and support teachers</li> </ul>

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Our policy envisages a whole-school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, the principal, the SEN Co-Ordinator, class teachers, SEN teachers, SNAs, parents, and pupils. In attempting to achieve the above objectives the Board of Management, principal, and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document. Roles and responsibilities are as follows:

The SEN Team: The SEN Team consists of the Principal, SEN Co-Ordinator, Special Class teachers, SET teachers and SNAs

#### **A. Board of Management (BOM)**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with additional educational needs

- oversee the development, implementation, and review of the provision of support in the school
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for SEN teachers
- Provide secure facilities for the storage of pupil documentation.

See Data Protection Policy

- Inform and encourage staff to avail of ongoing Professional Development. All staff relay and share this information with their colleagues.

## **B. The Role of the Principal**

The role of the principal is to:

- Co-ordinate day-to-day provision within Glencastle National School in liaison with the SEN Team, ensuring continuity of provision for all pupils and effective practice
- Assign staff strategically to their SEN roles and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, SEN teachers and SNAs) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Additional Educational Needs in cooperation with the Board of Management, teachers, parents, and children
- Develop and monitor the implementation of this policy on an ongoing basis
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supported teaching, prioritising those with the greatest needs. *(The Principal is the person who decides which pupils receive additional support and their time allocation.)*
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiating referrals
- Liaise with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) regarding all aspects of additional educational needs provision.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to the education of pupils with additional educational needs



- Ensure that whole-school collaboration and communication procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies

### **C. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Co-Ordinators**

Mainstream Setting: Primarily Principal

Special Classes: Primarily Assistant Principal

The role of the SEN Co-Ordinators is to:

- Oversee the day-to-day operation of this policy.
- Coordinate provision for children with additional educational needs.
- Liaise with SNAs with regard to supporting children with additional needs.
- Liaise with parents of children with additional needs.
- Monitor and evaluate provision for pupils with additional educational needs.
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching (Principal).
- Facilitate planning for class teachers with SEN teachers (Principal only).
- Support the implementation of a monitoring system at a whole-school level to assess the progress of children who avail of additional support (Principal).
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of AEN services. • Liaise with external agencies such as NEPS/AON to arrange assessments of children with additional educational needs.
- Liaise with teachers in the special classes in relation to procedures and support where necessary.
- Liaise with the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) regarding all aspects of additional educational needs provision.
- Advise on the Continuum of Support Framework and its whole school implementation (Principal only).

### **D. Mainstream Class Teacher**

*The class teacher has primary responsibility for the pupil's learning needs within their class.* Effective teaching and learning are critically important for all pupils. Their roles include:

- Being alert to the possibility that some children may have a specific learning difficulty or other additional educational need and bringing this to the attention of the principal and/or SEN Coordinator
- Making parents aware of the concerns of the school about their child's progress

- Attend Parent/Teacher meetings with parents/guardians e.g. in November and whenever necessary
- Implement the schools' policy and criteria for SEN selection
- Use the Continuum of Support Framework to identify the educational needs of pupils and implement SMART learning targets for pupils with additional educational needs.
- Attend meetings between SET Teacher(s) on a weekly basis and whenever necessary for communication and collaboration on Student Support Files, differentiation classroom support plans etc
- Plan lessons, and activities and adapt the physical environment carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.
- Outline SNA duties where applicable and when required, take responsibility for the Pupil's Care Plan for any child with additional needs
- Implement teaching programmes using any resources necessary that optimise the learning of all pupils and modify them as necessary
- Implement teaching programmes using any resources necessary that optimise the learning of all pupils and modify them as necessary
- To implement recommended programmes from an outside agency within the classroom setting eg: OT, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, SLT, Sight and/or Hearing impairment, Cerebral Palsy

#### **E. Special Education Teacher (SET):**

The role of the SET is to:

- Implement the schools' policy and criteria for SEN selection
- Use the Continuum of Support Framework to identify the educational needs of pupils and implement SMART learning targets for pupils with additional educational needs to include academic (Literacy and Numeracy), social, emotional, and behavioural needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language, and communication difficulties
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies to enhance Early Intervention,
- Develop a Student Support File(SSF) for pupils in receipt of SEN hours and maintain weekly/fortnightly planning for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of SEN teaching
- Attend meetings between SET Teacher(s) on a weekly basis and whenever necessary for communication and collaboration on Student Support Files, classroom support plans, differentiation, etc
- Meet with parents/guardians to discuss pupil's progress eg. At the Parent/Teacher meeting in November
- Liaise with the Principal, SEN coordinator, teachers, parents, and outside agencies
  - Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving additional support in learning
  - Conduct and administer any necessary assessments and maintain and review them on a half-termly basis or whenever required
  - Contribute to the development of policy on SEN at whole school level

- Provide advice and guidance to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing, Literacy, and Numeracy for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Contribute at the school level to decision-making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and the SET room
- In September of each year, the SET and SEN Team may administer baseline testing with all pupils who have been identified in need of additional support.
- In September of each year, the SET will provide an agreed timetable to all staff on the SEN Team. This timetable is updated on a half-term basis or whenever necessary

#### **F: Role of the Special Classes teacher**

- Implement school policy for SEN
- We consult with and collaborate with parents, SNAs, outside agencies, and the child to inform the School Support Plan
- Draw up school support plans /IEP by evaluating the child's external reports and assessments and by identifying children's priority needs.
- Based on SMART targets we implement appropriate interventions using a holistic, multisensory approach
- Targets are monitored regularly and amended as needed
- Continuous assessment as needed using a variety of assessment methodologies.
- Co-ordination of SNA support
- Maintain communication with relevant multi-disciplinary teams to ensure the children avail of correct additional services/therapies when assigned.
- Communicate with parents daily through communication/homework diaries and regular updates on Seesaw
- Meet as a Special Class team to ensure consistency in planning and implementing the curriculum and inclusion opportunities.
- Liaise with mainstream teachers to arrange appropriate inclusion/integration / reverse integration opportunities for the children in the Special classes

#### **G. Role of SNA**

- The role of an SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature. (Circular 0030/2014)
- The primary care support tasks may include:
  - Administration of medicine.
  - Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
  - Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground, and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times.

- Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
- Provision of non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The secondary care support tasks may include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks; as preparing and tidying a workspace, to present materials, display work, or transition from one lesson activity to another.
- Assistance with the development of Care Plans for children with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the child concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assistance with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

#### **H: Parents/ Guardians:**

Glencastle National School National School acknowledges the central role played by parents/Guardians of all pupils, particularly of pupils with additional educational needs. We value strong communication and collaboration links between home and school and identify support for and participation in their child's learning as key parental responsibilities. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher SET Teacher and Special Class Teachers.
- Endeavouring to create a home environment where the child can develop in a holistic way.
- Viewing, participating in the Student Support File, school plans, signing and returning consent forms, etc. to the school when required
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Participation in shared reading programmes
- Encouraging the child to visit the library
- Developing and participating in their child's development and learning
  - Supervision and support of Homework/planned and agreed targets
  - Promoting attendance in line with our '**Every Day Counts**' initiative
- Participating in activities organised by the school that is designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.

- Keeping their child healthy eg Healthy meals and adequate play and sleep
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors that may be affecting their child's progress
- Keeping the school informed of any medical conditions that may be affecting their child's progress, and of any assessments or interventions being carried out by outside agencies (SLT, CAMHS, OT, etc.)
- Helping children to look after and return school books and resources which are loaned to the child for use at home.

### **I. Pupils (Pupil roles and responsibilities are dependent on their age and ability)**

The school considers pupil input into the development, implementation, and review of their own learning as important. Our aim is to enable our pupils to:

- Develop independence as learners who can self-assess and reflect on their own work
- Develop awareness of the different learning preferences
- Develop awareness of their own strengths and challenges or needs

Develop confidence and require skills to aid their own learning eg by asking for help, using strategies and resources for easier learning, etc

- Enjoy success and evaluate their progress (AFL/AOL)
- Encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities outside of school
- Develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught during support teaching and apply these strategies and skills in their mainstream class situation (whole school)
  - Promoting attendance in line with our 'Every Day Counts' initiative
  - Complete homework to the best of their ability
  - Respect fellow peers, school staff and property

Keeping healthy eg Healthy meals and adequate play and sleep

Maintain a positive outlook for overall development and wellbeing

### **I. Outside Agencies**

The school will endeavour to engage both proactively and responsively with professional outside agencies in order to fully meet the needs of the individual child.

### **J Data Protection:**

In line with Data Protection Legislation, all teaching staff must ensure that pupils' records are stored in secure formats eg. Aladdin, school's filing cabinets

**K: Enrolment:** Refer to the School's Enrolment Policy

**L: DEIS:** See DEIS School Plan

### **Integration of Children with Additional Educational and/or Physical Needs.**

It is school practice to include and integrate each child into every area of school life. Every effort is made to accommodate to adapt the physical environment to support the child's needs. The school is committed to providing any additional resources required by our pupils subject to funding by the Department of Education (DES).

Parents seeking to enrol a child with additional educational needs in Glencastle National School are reminded that it is a requirement on their part to:

- Inform the school at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the educational need.
- Advise the school of any resources / special equipment

Advise the school of any specific dietary requirements

Advise the school of any additional care required such as a diagnosis of a medical condition eg diabetes, asthma, epilepsy and/or medication and that may need to be administered.

- Supply the school with all available assessment reports.
- Maintain contact with the school on an ongoing basis.
- Attend formal Student Support Plan (SSP) meetings where applicable.
- Contribute to target-setting and SSP monitoring.
  - Support their child in their learning at home

### **Collaboration and Communication:**

Prior to the child's enrolment, parents/guardians are requested to communicate the child's additional needs. The school acquaints itself with each child's needs through the following:

- Meeting between parents/principal/class teacher/SEN Team members, as appropriate. Parents are invited to bring their own interpreter, where necessary.
- Obtaining copies/details of reports, assessments, etc. from SENO, and parents.
- Contact with the SENO, NEPS Psychologist, or other psychologist/speech therapist/occupational therapist, referral from other agencies, etc.

Every effort is made by the school to facilitate collaboration and communication between those involved in the pupil's education, particularly in the case of a SEN pupil.

SSP meetings are arranged at intervals throughout the year. Parental requests for meetings with Class Teachers and SET teachers, outside of these may be facilitated if suitable arrangements can be made for the supervision of the pupil's class.

The SET teachers meet weekly, where possible with the relevant mainstream teachers. Covering assessment, timetabling, continuing/discontinuing support teaching etc Collaboration between all of those involved in pupil education is essential. Mainstream teachers are asked to prepare topics to be taught in both Literacy and Numeracy prior to attending this meeting. This information is then shared and discussed during the meeting. Teachers can also discuss the progress of pupils currently receiving additional support from the SET team at this time. A template is available for recording content to be taught and the assignment of teaching duties. Each teacher is responsible for storing notes taken at these meetings.

SET teachers, Class Teachers, and Special Class Teachers meet with Parents/Guardians at Parent/Teacher Meetings in the first term of each year. All parties may request additional meetings if deemed required.

### **Transition to Glencastle School:**

Efforts are made to ensure a smooth transition to school for both the pupil and the school through:

- Pupil/parent visits in advance to familiarise themselves with the school environment and practices within

- Making all school staff and pupils aware of the need for inclusion (EPSEN Act).
- Liaison with SENO to arrange for additional personnel, resources, and training, if necessary.
- Health and safety issues arising from the child's mobility and care needs will be identified and where possible, strategies will be developed to address them. These may include access, to toilets, supervision, administration of medicine, intimate care, and access to courses for the SNA e.g. lifting techniques.

### **Transition from Glencastle National School to post-primary or to another primary school**

For pupils with additional educational needs, the transition from one primary school to another or from primary to post-primary school can be challenging. We aim to support these pupils in making this transition, by communicating relevant pupil details regarding strengths, needs, likely targets, and helpful strategies with the appropriate personnel in the transfer school. This is done with prior parental consent and SENO advice may be sought where appropriate. For a smooth transition to post-primary education, Glencastle School arranges visits at different intervals throughout the year with the school. Post-primary also have return visits with the school.

### **Inclusion:**

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our Inclusion Policy aims to enable all children to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the

individual needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them. For further information, see the school's Inclusion Policy.

### **Deployment of staff:**

It is school policy to ensure the most effective deployment of staff and/or redeployment in meeting the overall SEN requirements of the school taking into account the experience and expertise of teachers and SNAs.

### **Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)**

Special Needs Assistants are allocated to the school by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The SNA works under the direction and supervision of the class teacher in order to meet the specific care needs of identified pupils. The principal has the sole responsibility of allocating SNA support throughout the school. The allocation will be reviewed annually.

### **Record Keeping:**

As well as short-term planning documents and assessment folders, the following records are kept for pupils with additional educational needs:

- Student Support File (SSF)
- Copies of any assessment reports received from outside agencies
- Records of meetings
- Any other documentation pertinent to the child's learning. All documents will be held and maintained in compliance with the school's Data Protection policy.
  - Student Support Plan (SSP)
  - The Student Support File will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the 'Student Support File Guidelines (NEPS)' which was first published by the Department of Education in September 2014. The file will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:
    - • Details from the Class Teacher
    - • Assessment Results
    - • Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
    - • Learning strengths and attainments
    - • Priority Learning Needs
    - • Learning Targets
    - • Class Based Learning Activities
  - All files are updated on an ongoing basis, starting in September and a detailed review of targets takes place half-termly or whenever necessary using the following headings:
    - ***Achieved, Partially Achieved, Ongoing***



- The SET Teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet with the parents to discuss the child's progress in light of the review.

### **Support Plan / IEP Process**

- Early SEPTEMBER Handover meeting.  
SET and Class Teacher gather further information by completing formal and informal assessments
- October SMART SP Targets are formulated from the data gathered by the Child's SEN Team. A draft IEP is written and sent home for parent's approval. IEP is finalised and signed at the parent / teacher meeting and the plan is put into action
- FEBRUARY  
IEP is reviewed and an IEP review Meeting is requested. Updated IEP signed by parents
- May  
End-of-year gathering of information by completing formal and informal assessments to inform progress and SP Review
- JUNE Final IEP Review Meeting

### **Special Education Teaching-Strategies**

As a means of promoting best learning practices and minimising the occurrence of learning difficulties as far as possible, the following strategies are implemented:

- The whole school development and implementation of the school's Literacy and Numeracy plans which outline agreed approaches to the teaching and learning for each class level.
- Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of all pupils in September led by the class teacher, Parent-Teacher Meetings, and regular school communication, through the updates on the school blog and website.
- The implementation of the Paired Reading Programme in selected classes, and other peer tutoring systems where appropriate.eg, DEAR, Silent Reading
- The implementation of the Shared Reading Programme in selected classes, where pupils and parents are encouraged to read together
- The use of appropriate digital technology to engage pupils and enhance learning.
- Daily in-class support for Literacy and Numeracy for Junior Infants to Sixth Class, where possible.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher- Formal and Informal.
- Development of phonological awareness and the explicit teaching of phonics at the infant level
- Access to decodable texts for emergent readers
- Implementation of the Aistear programme in infant classes

- Implementation of the Ready, Set, Go Maths programme in infant classes, and further use of methodologies in older classes.

If a Junior Infant is presenting with challenges with Phonological Awareness and /or Jolly Phonics, Early Intervention will be established for this pupil. (See Language/English Policy)

### **Selection of Pupils for SET:**

- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
- These include, but are not limited to:
  - • Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) – Senior Infants
  - • Non-Verbal Reading Test (NVRT) – 1<sup>st</sup>/2nd Class & 4th Class
  - • New Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NNRIT) – 3rd Class & 5th Class
  - • Drumcondra Reading and Mathematics -1st Class to 6th Class.
  - • Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) /BIAP– Junior Infants to 1st Class,
- Where difficulties are identified, further diagnostic testing and baseline testing may take place in order to develop an understanding of the pupil's strengths and areas for development. The results of these standardised tests and diagnostic tests, along with teacher observations and records, are used to determine if a pupil will receive learning support and to establish what targets will be set.
- Senior Infants complete the MIST Assessments in February of each year. Pupils identified as having difficulty in Literacy and Numeracy are prioritised for receiving withdrawn learning support for the remainder of the school year. If these pupils are still having difficulty by the end of the school year, they will also receive learning support the following year.
- First to sixth-class pupils complete the Drumcondra standardised tests in Literacy and Numeracy in the last term of each year. Pupils who achieve results at or below the 16th percentile in these standardised tests will receive learning support the following year.
- Those pupils who have a discrepancy of 12 points or more between their NVRT/NNRIT results from their standardised Drumcondra tests, may also be offered learning support.
- Any Junior Infant whose progress is a concern by the end of Term 1, will be considered for Early Intervention.
- If there is any pupil whose Social/Emotional/Behavioural development is a concern, they too may be considered for learning support.
- Before any pupil receives support teaching, consent must be received from the Parents/Guardians.

### **Provision of SET**

A system of in-class support and withdrawal operates in Glencastle National School.

This system may be whole class support, withdrawn 1:1 support or small group support. This support covers approximately 20-30-minute slots on a daily or weekly basis. This support covers Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

All staff follow the agreed SET timetable.

### **Baseline Testing:**

In September of each year, the support team may administer baseline testing with all pupils who have been identified in need of additional support.

The results of the baseline test will be used, along with formal and informal information from the Class Teacher and the standardised results from the previous June to set SMART targets for support. These targets are reviewed every half term.

### **Timetabling:**

In September, a timetable is agreed among all staff. Each member has a copy as well as a list of the children who are to attend. Priority is given to pupils with the most significant need. The timetable will be revised every half term. The timetable is a working document and will change as the needs of the school do.

### **Continuing and Discontinuing SET:**

Guided by the Continuum of Support Framework and using the school's SEN's criteria for selection, the Special Education Team decides on continuing and discontinuing supported learning.

In the event of a pupil's support being discontinued, observation and monitoring will remain for the pupil, should they need to be reconsidered for receipt of supportive learning in the future.

Children with an official diagnosis will receive ongoing support. Children without an official diagnosis but are high priority or a concern, will initially receive a 6-week period of support which will be reviewed again and decided upon.

### **Referral to Outside Agencies**

- The principal and SEN Co-Ordinator manage the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologists.
- The principal and SEN Co-Ordinator meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent.
- The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, Class Teacher, and the SEN Co-Ordinator as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted.
- This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed with appropriate school personnel, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.

## **Special Classes**

Other policies that guide the practice in the Special Classes include; safety statements, intimate care policy, administration of medication, physical intervention with pupils where applicable, inclusion, school transport, enrolment, and code of behaviour.

The Special classes offer the Primary Curriculum and the adapted NCCA guidelines at a pace appropriate for the individual needs of the children in the class. The curriculum is differentiated to each child's unique learning needs. Alongside this are the SP's where the children are focusing on individual targets to ensure progression in priority areas of their learning.

The teachers of the Special classes strive to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure consistent environment where the intellectual, spiritual, physical and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed in accordance with the needs of the child. To promote positive development behavioral strategies are implemented in a structured safe learning environment where consistency and routine are core.

## **The aims of the Special Classes**

- To enable the student to live a full life as a unique individual through access to an appropriate and balanced curriculum 🎓
- To enable the student to function as independently as possible and as a valued member of society through the provision of such education supports as are necessary to realize that potential

Our Special Classes are committed to promoting inclusion within our school and community and where possible we offer extracurricular activities to promote the social and communication skills of our young people, e.g. visits to the Post office, library, church, civic centre, sporting opportunities, school tours, etc.

We offer when appropriate in class therapies such as music therapy, art therapy, play therapy, and Lego Therapy. Support from Occupational therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, and Psychology.

## **Methodologies used in the Special Classes**

Our teaching is primarily led by the child's interests and strengths. We build on from this whilst also developing the child's sensory and communication needs, daily living skills, and behavior.

Some of our methodologies and programmes include or are informed by:

Sensory circuits and movement breaks

Tac Pac

Lego therapy

Attention Autism

Teach work systems

PECS

Lámh and Core boards

Shoebox tasks

Handwriting without tears

Language experience approach to reading

Numicon

Intensive Interaction

Assistive technology, including switch and eye gaze

Ipads  
Touch Type

Social Skills Programme- conversation station, Lego Club, AISTEAR

### **Pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL)**

#### Enrolment of Pupils with English as an Additional Language

- The school's admissions policy governs the enrolment of all pupils.
- The school will offer all reasonably possible support to parents in completing the enrolment process.

#### Education of Pupils with English as an Additional Language

- Pupils with English as an additional language will only be placed in an age-appropriate class.
- Every effort will be made to help the pupils settle socially in the class, and all school personnel will collaborate to help the child settle in their new environment.
- Decisions based on exemption from Irish will be determined by the latest guidelines from the Department of Education.
- The school recognises the positive impact of competency in an additional language has on learning, and encourages proficiency in home languages.

#### Provision of Language Support for Pupils with English as an Additional Language

- Provision of EAL support is a key focus of the SEN team.
- The amount of language support time allocated to any child will depend on their current command of the language based on formal EAL testing in reading, writing, speaking, and listening using the *Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK)* and other observations.
- In general, older pupils will be offered more language support, as there will be a higher demand on them to obtain the language skills needed for their class level.
- Language support will be offered mainly in a small group setting.
- To date, The Department of Education allows *two years* of language support for each child, and in general, the child's support will be phased out after this period. Enrolment of Pupils with English as an Additional Language:

### **Conclusion**

Success Criteria: The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in the enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of additional education for pupils with identified needs based on positive assessment results
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil's progress
- Evidence of inclusion of pupils with additional educational needs in our school
- Feedback from teaching staff, SNAs, pupils, psychologists etc
- Inspectorate reports
- Children are enabled to monitor their own learning and become independent learners working towards the best of their ability.

**Implementation and review.**

This policy will be implemented from September 2023 and will be reviewed in the 2025/2026 school year, or sooner if deemed necessary.

**Ratification and Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Glencastle NS on 10th October 2023 and is available on the school website and the shared drive.

Signed: Tom Mc Andrew Date: 10/10/23

Chairperson

Signed: Catherine Mc Intyre Date: 10/10/23

Principal

