



Woodstock ETNS Special Educational Needs Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management is committed to a whole school approach to inclusive education by complying with legislation and by implementing good practice. It strives to ensure that:

- There is equality of access to education for all children
- All children have a sense of belonging to the school community
- All children can grow and learn at their own pace
- All children are allowed to reach their full potential
- All children will gain self-knowledge, self-respect and feelings of positive empowerment
- All children are capable of valuing individuality, empathise with others and can make friends

The Board of Management supports its staff to take an innovative and collaborative approach to addressing individual children's educational, social and emotional needs. Woodstock Educate Together National School aims to provide a happy, secure, friendly learning environment, where children, parents, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and the Board of Management work in partnership. Each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere. We aim to provide for the all-round development of our children.

Rationale

Inclusion is at the core of our teaching and children with special educational needs are enabled to grow and learn in a school community where they feel valued. The Board of Management supports its staff in creating an inclusive environment for all children that

- Sets suitable learning challenges for all children
- Responds to each child's diverse learning needs
- Overcomes barriers to learning and assessment

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's code of behaviour policy, child protection policy, enrolment policy, data protection policy and health and safety policy.

Aims and Objectives

Woodstock Educate Together National School aims to:

- Develop the self-esteem and overall well-being of each child
- Ensure that all children gain access to a broad and balanced curriculum and have the opportunity of access to an appropriate education
- Foster a whole school approach to teaching and learning for all children including those with special educational needs and for children whom English is not their first language
- Develop a partnership with parents and guardians to support the development of children both academically and holistically
- To ensure that different teaching and learning experiences are provided to ensure that children are engaging meaningfully with the curriculum and are given the opportunity to develop the skills and competencies necessary to lead an independent life

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that this policy is in place and up-to-date and that adequate resources are allocated towards special educational needs provisions. It does so within the constraints of the Department of Education and Skills policy and resource allocation.

Principal

The principal is responsible for ensuring that special educational needs procedures are implemented and monitored on an ongoing basis. The principal oversees the whole school assessments which identify children who require additional teaching support. The principal liaises with teachers, parents/guardians and

external agencies for children with special educational needs. The principal provides teachers with guidance on relevant teaching methods, materials and career development opportunities. The principal provides line management to the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and assists children with special educational needs in their transition to second level education. The principal's duties are assumed by the Deputy Principal in their absence.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has the primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including pupils with special educational needs and EAL. They endeavor to alleviate learning difficulties using a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies. They implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties. The class teacher will engage in all processes of the Continuum of Support, identifying pupils in need of Classroom Support and implementing specific targets therein. The class teacher will maintain positive communication with the parents/guardians at all stages of engagement with the Continuum of Support

Special Educational Teacher

SET refers to any teacher employed by the Board of Management in a special educational teaching capacity. The SET team implements a broad range of strategies that endeavor to alleviate learning difficulties, to enhance early learning and where necessary select the pupils for additional support. The SET team consults and collaborates with the principal, the class teachers, the SNAs, the parents and guardians and any external agencies involved. As appropriate, the SET team carry out diagnostic tests and draw up individual pupil profiles, plans and programmes. The SET team provide in-class support teaching and where necessary withdraw pupils for additional support teaching. The SET team is responsible for maintaining weekly planning records and progress reports for all pupils receiving additional support teaching. The SET team are responsible for both teaching and non-teaching duties such as the analysis of standardised test results and analysis of any standardised test results or external reports from pupils transferring to the school. The SET team are encouraged to upskill on a continual basis in relation to special educational needs provision and EAL.

Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

SNAs are recruited to assist schools in providing a range of non-teaching supports to pupils with special educational needs or to pupils who have been identified by the class teacher and/or the SET team who are experiencing difficulties in accessing their learning for a range of reasons. SNAs are allocated to the school by the Special Educational Needs Organisation (SENO). Within this allocation, the principal coordinates with the class teacher and SET team to deploy the SNA resources to the children with the highest levels of care needs. SNAs may support more than one pupil at any given time. Pupils from different classes may have access to the same SNA. SNAs are not always based with the one pupil for the entire school day. The SNA works closely with the principal and the class teacher to ensure that the pupil's care needs are met. Circular 0030/2014 clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the SNA.

Parents

Parents and guardians are encouraged to develop their children's early and ongoing oral language, reading, mathematical, social and life skills. They are provided with guidance on how to optimise learning for their children and cultivate a positive attitude towards their child's education. Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with the pupil's class teacher and where relevant the pupil's support teacher. Parents are encouraged to review their child's support plans and to have an input into the targets and goals being set for their child. Parents are encouraged to foster an environment where difference and inclusion is celebrated.

Pupil

Good engagement and participation in their own education has many associated benefits for pupils. This is particularly important for pupils with special educational needs and can help enhance their academic and social and emotional outcomes.

Engagement is enhanced when schools listen to and build on pupils' interests, aspirations and strengths

when developing educational interventions. This involves actively including pupils in a shared assessment for learning process, setting shared learning objectives, and jointly reviewing progress. Pupil participation is supported through teaching that is responsive to the personal needs of the learner and is further enhanced by structuring and pacing learning experiences that are challenging, engaging and enjoyable.

On a whole-school level, this engagement is facilitated by ensuring that children

- Become familiar with the medium- and short-term learning targets that have been set for them.
- Have the opportunity to contribute to the setting of these targets, e.g. using WALT or WILF
- Participate in project work on topics of interest to them.
- Learn self-assessment strategies and learning strategies in various curricular areas.

Children who are in receipt of additional support teaching should, as appropriate,

- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets.
- Develop ownership of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these to improve their own learning.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities including self-assessment.

External Agencies

The school engages where necessary with external agencies for all matters relating to special educational needs for the children in its care, for example, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPs), the local SENO, and different external therapists such as Educational and Clinical Psychologists. The school may also, where necessary, engage with specialists and support organisations for specific additional needs or disabilities.

Alleviation of Learning Difficulties

The school aims to promote inclusion at all times and alleviate learning difficulties using a range of strategies. By encouraging participation of all pupils in all school activities and by providing a stimulating and supportive learning environment that of good quality teaching, every pupil is experiencing an inclusive and meaningful education.

Early Intervention

When difficulties are observed in the early years of a pupil's education, the classroom teacher and SET team will implement a range of early intervention strategies such as in-class team teaching, small group withdrawal booster groups and small group activity groups. These interventions are a short-term strategy to bridge the gap for the pupils observed to be experiencing challenges in accessing their learning in junior and senior infants.

Criteria for the Allocation of Support Teaching

Support teaching is dependent on DES annual allocation of resources. Teaching is prioritised so that the pupils with the highest level of need receive the highest level of support, as follows in order of priority 1-8:

1. Pupils from second to sixth class at or below the 12th percentile in literacy
2. Early intervention for literacy, Junior Infants to Second Class
3. Senior Infants identified by the class teacher through MIST or any other screening instruments as having difficulty in literacy
4. Pupils from second to sixth class at or below the 12th percentile in numeracy
5. Early intervention for numeracy, junior infants to second class
6. Pupils from third to fifth class at the 13th to the 20th percentile in literacy and numeracy

7. Senior Infants identified by the class teacher, through observation and any other screening measures such as having difficulty in numeracy
8. Pupils who could benefit from a programme set up for a child in receipt of support by joining this child's programme, provided that this would not disadvantage the child who is entitled to support. This support could be based on curricular, social or emotional needs

Guidelines for the Provision for children with emerging special educational needs - The Staged Approach (Refer to Circular No 0013/2017 and Special Educational Needs, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, NEPS, 2007)

Special Education Circular 0013/2017 provides guidelines for the allocation of Special Education Teaching. The continuum of support operates under a three-tiered approach, with the highest level of support being given to the pupils with the highest level of needs within the school.

The goal of the Continuum of Support is to ensure that all pupils experience a purposeful and inclusive education that is meaningful to them.

The school strives to promote inclusion and alleviate learning difficulties at all times by using a range of stimulating strategies on a whole-school level.

When the class teacher, in collaboration with the parents, principal and SET team identify a pupil who is experiencing difficulty in accessing their learning at a whole-class level, the Continuum of Support will be introduced. The Continuum of Support is outlined below.

Stage 1: Continuum of Support

The class teacher will:

- Identify concerns regarding the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a child using teacher observation, screening checklists, infant profiling, results of standardised tests
- The class teacher will draw up a classroom support plan for extra help to be implemented within the mainstream classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management and will meet with the parents or guardians to agree on the short-term learning targets.
- The class teacher will implement the classroom support plan for a duration of six to eight weeks. The teacher will then review the classroom support plan with the parents and note any developments.
- If concern remains after the review and/or adaptations to the plan, the pupil will move to stage 2 of the Continuum of Support and the SET team in the school will be informed.

Stage 2: Continuum of Support

Following on from a Stage 1 intervention where no progress has been made, the pupil will move to stage 2 intervention. The class teacher and SET teacher will decide whether in-class support or withdrawal support would be most beneficial to the pupil at this point.

- The class teacher and SET team will request permission from parents to move the pupil to a Stage 2 intervention on the continuum of support.
- In conjunction with the parents and the pupil, the SET team will draw up a stage 2 support plan and identify 3-4 priority targets to set for the pupil.
- The stage 2 support plan intervention will be implemented for at least a full term and the pupil will

then be reassessed to note any developments.

- Where the pupil has achieved their targets and there are no other priority concerns, the pupil will revert back to a classroom support plan and the SET team will discontinue their intervention.
- If there have been no changes during the stage 2 intervention, the SET team may decide to continue on Stage 2 and set different targets or they may recommend that the pupil be moved to Stage 3 of the Continuum of Support – the highest level of support.

Stage 3: Continuum of Support

Stage 3 is implemented when children who have received at least 1 term of academic or social and emotional support at Stage 2 of the continuum who have not met their targets.

- Children who have a high level of need may still be in receipt of Stage 3 support even without a diagnosis.
- In some cases, the class teacher and SET team may make a recommendation to the parents for their child to be assessed by an outside agency.
- The findings of these reports allow the class teacher and SET teacher to understand the pupil's learning style better and allow the class teacher and SET teacher to set achievable targets that are in line with the pupil's learning needs
- The SET teacher will draw up a stage 3 support plan which will contain specific targets relating to the priority needs of the pupil.

Decrease or Discontinued of Support

It should be recognised that sometimes, decisions may be made to decrease or discontinue support as individual pupil's support needs diminish relative to the needs of other pupils.

Support for children whom English is an additional language

The DES provides limited support for children for whom English is an additional language under its General Allocation Model.

Exemption from the Study of Irish

The school can apply for an exemption from the study of Irish for any pupil who is eligible for an exemption under the Exemption from the study of Irish Circular 0054/2022. When a pupil is eligible for and receives an Exemption from the study of Irish, the pupil will continue to participate in Irish class with their peers and contribute to the oral and aural aspects of the learning.

Transfer to Other Schools

Information is transferred to other schools when the pupil transfers on a need-to-know basis (Under Section 28 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, it is a requirement of the Board of Management that information concerning attendance and the child's educational progress be communicated between schools). Reports, documents and any other significant information may be passed on to another school following parental consent.

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Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

Signed: Anne Gregory - Chairperson, Board of Management

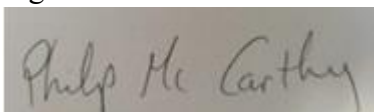
Date: 7/03/2025 Signed:

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature appears to be "Anne Gregory".

Principal - Philip McCarthy

Date: 7/03/2025

Signed:

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