

Special Educational Needs Policy

Introduction

Robertson National School is a co-educational, mainstream primary school under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

It caters for a full cross section of children, all of whom have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals.

We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community.

The purpose of this Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective educational support to pupils experiencing low achievement and/or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

It is also to fulfil D.E.S circular 0013/17-Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary School; Special Education Teaching Allocation and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Education Needs:

- One Special Education Teacher (S.E.T.) (permanent, full-time, based in Robertson N.S. who is shared in a cluster arrangement with another school)
- One visiting Special Education Teacher (permanent, full-time, based in another school)
- One English as an Additional Language (E.A.L.) Teacher (temporary, part-time who is based in Robertson N.S.)
- Two Special Needs Assistants (S.N.A.'s)

Objectives of Educational Support

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning
- Promote collaboration among teachers

Guiding Principles of Educational Support

- All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals
- The resources provided to support pupils with Special Educational Needs, will be

used to facilitate the development of a truly educationally, 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, a staged to support provision at Class Support/School Support/School Support Plus levels
- The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care 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

As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

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 S.E.N. (Special Educational Needs) and children whose first language is not English, who receive education support from the English as an Additional Language (E.A.L.) teacher, 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. Our school welcomes pupils of all nationalities and cultures and respects and values diversity in our school community.

Exceptional Ability/Gifted Pupils

According to the Education Act 1998, children with ability at the 97th percentile level in at least one area are seen as having special needs.

A child who scores a STEN of 10 in standardised tests for English and/or Maths, two years in a row, may be assessed as being gifted.

These pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able (IQ of 130+) will be offered a differentiated curriculum and information regarding relevant outside agencies such as referral, assessment and programmes at the Irish Centre for Talented Youth.

Principles for inclusion

Setting Suitable Learning Challenges

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. In order to do this, our school will use the 'Continuum of Support Process' as outlined in Table 1 below to identify educational needs. Identification of educational needs is central to setting suitable learning challenges for our S.E.N pupils. Using the Continuum of Support framework, our school will identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. It is important to look at a pupil's needs in context, and to use our resources to support this (for example, learning environment checklist, teacher checklist for whole-class structures and supports).

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

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>
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School Support	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher observation records• Teacher-designed measures/assessments• Parent and pupil interviews• Learning environment checklist• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy• Formal observation of behaviour• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.</p> <p>A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time, (usually termly), and is subject to review.</p>
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 long term planning, (usually termly) and consultation.</p>

See Appendix 1 for the Student Support File including the Support Plan template, Support Review Record template, Support File Log of Actions and the Support Checklist

Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs

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 our support, the 'Planning Template' outlining the 6point action plan below will be utilised.

Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (Primary Guidelines, P19-20)

<p>Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs</p>	<p>Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).</p> <p>Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
<p>Action 2: Setting targets</p>	<p>Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the continuum of support.</p>
<p>Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches</p>	<p>Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.</p>
<p>Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes</p>	<p>Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.</p>
<p>Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources</p>	<p>Cross-reference the needs of pupils at school support and school support plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place.</p> <p>Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.</p>
<p>Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress</p>	<p>Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers • At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers.

Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Children

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning which must be addressed through special arrangements. Our S.E.N. policy envisages a whole school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, the Principal, Class teacher, Special Education Teacher, Special Needs Assistants (S.N.A.'s) and the parents.

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the B.O.M, Principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

Board of Management

The B.O.M. will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with Special Educational Needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's S.E.N. provision – funding, equipment and personnel. The B.O.M.:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on support for children with extra needs
- Oversee adequate class accommodation and teaching resources subject to funding from Department of Education and skills
- Provides a secure facility for storage of records

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. He will work closely with staff and will keep the B.O.M. informed about the working of this policy. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with staff to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with Special Educational Needs, and ensure that all school staff (Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers and Special Needs Assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Organise the timetable for support teaching
- Liaise with and advise teaching staff about continuous professional development relating to Special Education

- Liaise with and advise S.N.A.'s with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaise with parents of children with special needs
- Keep a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching
- Facilitate planning for Class Teachers with Support Teachers
- 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 special needs services
- Select children for psychological assessment in consultation with Class and Support teachers and National Educational Psychologists Service (N.E.P.S.)
- Liaise with external agencies such as N.E.P.S. to arrange assessments of children with S.E.N. subject to availability and or funding
- Liaise with the school's Special Educational Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.) regarding all aspects of special education provision
- Store confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding S.E.N. children and share same with Class Teachers, Support Teachers, S.N.A.'s, other agencies where appropriate
- Participate in and/or oversee the drafting of Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus plans and the Review Records of these
- Arrange for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate

The Role of the Class Teacher

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with Special Educational Needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued.

The mainstream Class Teachers have primary responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes including those selected for supplementary teaching.

In supporting the development and implementation of the Continuum of Support Framework, the Class Teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the Special Education Teacher in the development of a School Support Plan by

identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets

- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities

Accordingly, classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. This will include adapting their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. All mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with Special Educational Needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream Class Teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

A key role of successful educational/supplementary teaching support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of student support plans (Classroom Support, School Support or School Support Plus)

The Role of the Special Education Teacher

Special Education Teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or

individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions should be based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary.

The type of support offered depends on the child's individual needs and takes the form of:

- curriculum support
- life and/or social skills training
- physical training/fine/gross motor development
- speech training/communication and/or language development
- behaviour modification programmes
- assistance with sensory modulation
- development of anger management strategies
- a combination of some/all of the above

Special Education Teachers, in consultation with Class Teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant Continuum of Support plan. Short-term planning (weekly plans) should reflect the Support Plan targets and should break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis. Outcomes for pupils should be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes should also be used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

The role of the Special Education Teacher is to:

- Develop an School Support or School Support Plus education plan (formerly known as an Individual Education Plan -I.E.P. or an Individual Pupil Learning Profile-I.P.L.P) for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
- Maintain a weekly planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of learning support
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement
- Contribute to the development of policy on Special Education at whole school level
- Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Contribute at 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 in the Special Education room

- Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Education and services in the school such as timetabling educational provision to pupils
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychologists/speech and language therapists to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
- Track the progress pupils who have discontinued educational support

The Role of Special Needs Assistants

The duties of the S.N.S., (according to the guidelines from the D.E.S. under the direction of the Principal/Class teachers) are comprised of meeting the care needs of the S.E.N. pupils to which they have been assigned (Circular 10/76) progress.

Primary care duties may include:

- assistance with feeding
- toileting and general hygiene
- mobility and orientation
- supervision
- communication
- non-nursing care needs

Secondary care duties may include:

- preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a pupil to do so
- assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans (P.P.P.'s) for S.E.N. pupils
- assistance with maintaining a care journal and care monitoring system
- planning for activities where there may be additional care requirements

The S.N.A. should:

- support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils
- support learning and teaching in the classroom
- attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the B.O.M.
- attend I.E.P. meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- ensure the safety of the S.E.N. pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty
- maintain a record of support provided to the S.E.N. pupil
- accompany S.E.N. pupil to supplementary lessons when appropriate

Parental Involvement

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. Parental engagement is enhanced when parents are consulted in relation to their children's needs and strengths, on the supports and

strategies being developed to support their children, and when they are involved in regular reviews of progress.

The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs. Parents are encouraged to meet with the Special Education Teacher, specifically, to collaborate to identify learning targets for their child at the beginning of each school term. They are also invited to meet the Special Education Teacher to review their child's progress at the end of each term. There may also be opportunities for parents to work collaboratively with the school through initiatives such as paired reading.

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of the special educational needs provision available in the school. Our school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with Special Educational Needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school.

Parents/Guardians are the primary educators of their children.

In the context of any child's learning, but particularly of those pupils who require learning support or who have a Special Educational Need, the support and engagement of parents with their child's Support Plan, is vital to its success.

In general, parents of the pupils of our school can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Special Education Teacher (S.E.T.)(where applicable)
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Participation in shared reading programmes
- Encouraging the child to visit the library
- Developing the child's oral language
- Developing the child's social mathematics
- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress

- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills
- Helping children to look after schoolbooks and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school

Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all the partners in education involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The various strands of the system include:

- Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher following a low score on a screening test
- Principal and/or Special Education Teacher and/or Class Teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval of further diagnostic assessment and/or provision of supplementary teaching
- Regular communication between the Special Education Teacher and the Class Teacher by participating in formal and informal meetings
- Regular communication between the Special Education Teacher and parents

Enrolment of Children with a Disability and/or Special Education Needs

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has S.E.N.

However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

- Robertson National School is a mainstream school, and has higher pupil/teacher ratios unlike those that apply in 'special' schools
- In general, the teachers in our school are trained and qualified to teach in mainstream education. They do not, in general, have any Special Education Needs teacher training, experience, or qualifications, such as teachers in special schools have

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- While pupils with special needs can be integrated into a mainstream class, and may be supported by a Special Needs Assistant and supplementary teaching, as allowed by the Department of Education and Skills (D.E.S.), this is not the same as the intensive one to one teaching s/he would enjoy in a special school
- An ordinary mainstream school does not have ancillary services enjoyed by special schools, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy
- The school is fully committed to the provision of facilities specially adapted for pupils with physical disabilities and subject to funding by the D.E.S.
- A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices.
- Every child in the school, including those with a disability and /or Special Educational Needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the Staff and Board of Management.
- The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support and supervision beyond that which is offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year.
- The school also cannot sanction the provision of any external person, professional or agency who/which is not recognised by governmental departments, or professionals of said, (the Department of Education, the Department of Health) in the provision of educational and/or physical support to S.E.N. pupils
- The Class Teacher, Special Education Teacher and Special Needs Assistants will periodically be required to participate at Staff Development and Curriculum Training Courses. Such professional development events take place within the existing school year
- A child with a disability and/or Special Educational Needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will not have any separate or additional provisions put into place from his/her peers in the event of staff illness, absences or whole school events such as school visits etc.
- From year to year the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in personnel

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ Special Educational Needs.

To ensure this we require:

- A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child

- To enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment, which will be treated with the utmost confidence at all times
- Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis
- An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or Special Educational Needs is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child

Resources

Robertson N.S. is a well-resourced school, which constantly monitors and updates its resources. I.T. provision is good and is updated regularly.

Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

1. Promotion of Literacy/Numeracy:

- Genre Writing
- Print rich environment
- Paired reading
- Story time, Library time, Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R.) time, World Book Day activities, Word games, Class library, participation in literacy festivals eg. Wainfest
- Access to Literacy/Numeracy websites on school laptops, iPads and at home

2. Early Intervention

We believe it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible so that effective interventions can be put in place.

The M.I.S.T. (Middle Infants Screening Test) is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants during the third term of the school year.

Pupils who present with scores below the cut-off mark in two categories of the test, are selected to participate in the Forward Together Programme.

The parents of these pupils are encouraged to participate in the delivery of this programme over a period of 8-10 weeks.

At the end of the 8-10 weeks, every participating pupil is re-tested (using M.I.S.T.) to measure progress made as a result of this early intervention.

Selection of Pupils for Education Support/Supplementary Teaching

The following categories of pupils are determined to be eligible to receive supplementary teaching support:

- Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy
- Children who have Mild, Moderate, General or Specific Learning Disabilities
- Children with specific speech and language disorders/difficulties
- Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be allocated supplementary teaching hours
- The principle of Early Intervention applies so pupils from Senior Infants to Second Class should be given priority in the allocation of support teaching
- From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
- Priority for education support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 10th Percentile, excluding in the main, pupils who have received a diagnosis of S.E.N. as a result of a psychological/medical assessment
- In the case of pupils performing at or below the 10th percentile, the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, the Special Education Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil's performance, and supplementary teaching is offered

Referral to out of School Agencies

- When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 10th percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents, and may then be supported by a Special Education Teacher
- Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment to an educational psychologist
- The Principal co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist, subject to availability and or funding
- The Principal and/or Special Education Teacher and/or Class Teacher 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 may visit the school to meet with the pupil, principal, Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher as appropriate and will forward the school a report of the findings of his/her assessment

Timetabling for Support Sessions

- The provision of educational support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths
- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular subject each time they attend Support sessions. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised
- The provision of supplementary teaching support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
- In-class Support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the Special Education Teacher

Stages of Assessment and Provision

The Continuum of Support Framework set out by the D.E.S. is used to identify and support children with additional needs.

Special Education Needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe and from transient to long-term and pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs.

This framework enables us to implement a staged approach to ensure our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support.

These are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

Identification of educational needs is central to this policy and the new allocation model.

These educational needs include academic, social and emotional needs and those associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.

We can therefore identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a Class Teacher identifies a child with S.E.N., the Class Teacher consults with the Special Education Teacher and provides interventions that are ADDITIONAL TO or DIFFERENT FROM those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the Class Teacher.

The template below is used to detail all children who are in receipt of Classroom, School or School Support interventions in the school year.

Record of Differentiated Support in Class

Register of Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework

Classroom Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard
School Support				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support
School Support Plus				
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Nature of Support	Focus of Support

Stage One

This is the most common type of support and involves the Class Teachers. The teacher initially discusses their concerns with the child's parents as the child may require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are additional to or different from those required by other pupils in their class.

The triggers for this intervention could be;

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
- Has sensory or physical difficulties
- Has communication and/ or relationship difficulties

The class teacher completes a Stage One Classroom Support plan and monitors the record of differentiated support for half a term.

If this strategy does not work then the teacher will continue to the next stage, School Support.

Teachers inform parents that their child's needs would be better served in a small group with a Support Teacher.

Parents must then give their signed consent to supplementary teaching for School Support (Stage 2) and/or School Support Plus (Stage 3) interventions of the Continuum of Support framework to allow their child to access this level of support.

Stage Two

In cases where the record of differentiated support indicates that progress has not been made with the Classroom Support Plan, or if the results of tests (M.I.S.T., Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy) and teacher observation indicate this to be the case, intervention in the form of a Support Teacher will be accessed.

Again, Class Teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

This process involves more systematic gathering of information such as using diagnostic screening assessment to determine the specific areas of learning in which the child may be experiencing difficulty.

The Class Teacher will consult with the Special Education Teacher about the child's learning needs and the S.E.T. devises the School Support Plan for the pupil, which should be regarded as a working document where the response of the child to the actions taken is reviewed and monitored.

The action taken will be as follows:

- The class teacher and support teacher will differentiate the curriculum in specific areas with achievable goals to be implemented by the class teacher and support teacher
- If there are others in the class with similar difficulties in one or more of the specific areas, then a group educational plan will be implemented

- These programmes will be reviewed and updated every term
- While every effort will be made to allow the S.E.N. group/individual to remain included in class, there may be a need to work part of the programme in a S.E.N. room with the Support Teacher. This withdrawal will be time limited and for specific purposes only (e.g. Toe-by-Toe, Alpha to Omega, P.A.T. programmes)
- Where progress is such that the child is no longer giving cause for concern, the child will revert to the usual differentiated curriculum available to all children

Stage Three

The Support or Class Teacher will perform diagnostic tests on these children (at School Support level) usually at the beginning and end of the school year. These tests may include the York Assessment of Reading Comprehension, Schonell Spelling and Reading Tests, Non Reading Intelligence test etc.

When it has been identified that a child is still struggling and performing below the 10th percentile despite School Support/Action, the Class Teacher with the Support Teacher, in consultation with the child's parents, may consider the following actions:

1. A psychological assessment will be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004)
2. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including I.E.P./Support Plan targets and strategies
3. The triggers for extra intervention could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child:
 - Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
 - Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
 - Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
 - Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and I.E.P.
 - Has sensory and/or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
 - Has an ongoing communication or relationship difficulty that prevents social development, and act as a barrier to learning
4. If it is felt by the psychologist that a child has care needs, a Special Needs Assistant may be applied for
5. In circumstances where a child uses specialised equipment, consultants will be required to demonstrate how the equipment is to be used to at least two S.N.A.'s and either the Class or Support Teacher

6. The use of specialised yard equipment may also need to be demonstrated to these staff members. Courses will be provided on an ongoing basis to train staff in the relevant areas
7. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from Irish, the Principal will see to this under guidance from the Department of Education and Skills

Individual Education Plan

Based on Psychologist's report, tests, record of differentiation and School Action Plan the Class Teacher with the Support Teacher, S.N.A. (if assigned), parents and representatives of outside agencies (if necessary) formulate an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P. also known as a School Support Plus Plan)

These I.E.P.'s, which employ a small – steps approach, feature significantly in the provision that we make in school. By breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded targets, we ensure that the child experiences success.

This plan includes:

- the nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills
- the degree of the child's special needs
- the present level of performance
- services to be provided
- services for transition to 2nd level school where appropriate
- the goals, which the child is to achieve over a period of a term

The strategies set out in the I.E.P. will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting.

The management of the I.E.P. strategies will be the responsibility of the Class Teacher and the Special Education teacher.

REVIEW of I.E.P.'s /School Support Plus Plans

The Special Education Teacher will ensure that the review is conducted at the end of each term. This applies to both School Support and School Support Plus levels of the Continuum of Support.

Teacher designed tests, observations, diagnostic and/or screening tests may be used to assess pupil progress.

The Class Teacher consults with the Support Teacher, the child (and S.N.A. if appointed). They agree on the expected outcomes of the I.E.P. and a draft copy is formulated and sent home to the child's parents.

The parents are then invited to meet with the Special Education Teacher to discuss or make recommendations to the draft review if they so wish.

Again, outside agencies may play a part in formulating the final copy. The review will be recorded on the IEP Review form. (Attached, Appendix 1)

Where progress is unsatisfactory it may be decided that the child continues to receive additional supports.

Where progress is satisfactory, and where the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision will be made to revert to School Support/School Action level of support.

I.E.P.'s for children moving to 2nd level will be referred to at the consultation meetings with the 2nd level representative.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- In general, children who continue to score at or below the 10th Percentile should continue to receive supplementary support
- Following the end of each instructional term, a review of the child's support plan, as detailed above, is conducted.
A decision is then made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching
- The decision-making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher, the Special Education Teacher, and the pupil's parents, and account is also taken of the overall educational support demands in the school
- The criteria on which the decision will be made include:
 1. A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
 2. A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi-independently in the classroom learning context
- A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's School Support/School Support Plus Plan

Complaints

If parents have a complaint about the Special Education provision made, then they should make an appointment to speak to the Principal.

The complaint will be investigated and dealt with as early as possible, following the school's complaint procedures. If the matter is not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, then the matter proceeds to the B.O.M. Where necessary, the B.O.M. may seek advice/guidance from appropriate agencies/experts.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Pupils' progress in relation to achieving their targets will be regularly and carefully monitored.

This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress.

This will lead to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe as outlined below.

Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn should lead to adjustments in Support Plans. The Student Support File provides schools with a useful resource to support and record this process.

It includes a Support Review Record to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and pupils.

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Such monitoring of progress, and subsequent adaptation of Support Plans, are key drivers of effective practice.

In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, it is also important to review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level.

This review will include some of the following measures: attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

The B.O.M. will ensure that S.E.N. provision is an integral part of the school development plan and will evaluate the effectiveness and success of this policy by monitoring:

- the standards obtained by children with special needs
- the number of children at each of the three stages: Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus
- The level and pattern of help (i.e. average time allocated and the balance of in-class and withdrawal support)
- Views of parents
- Staff views
- Children's views

Implementation and Review

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

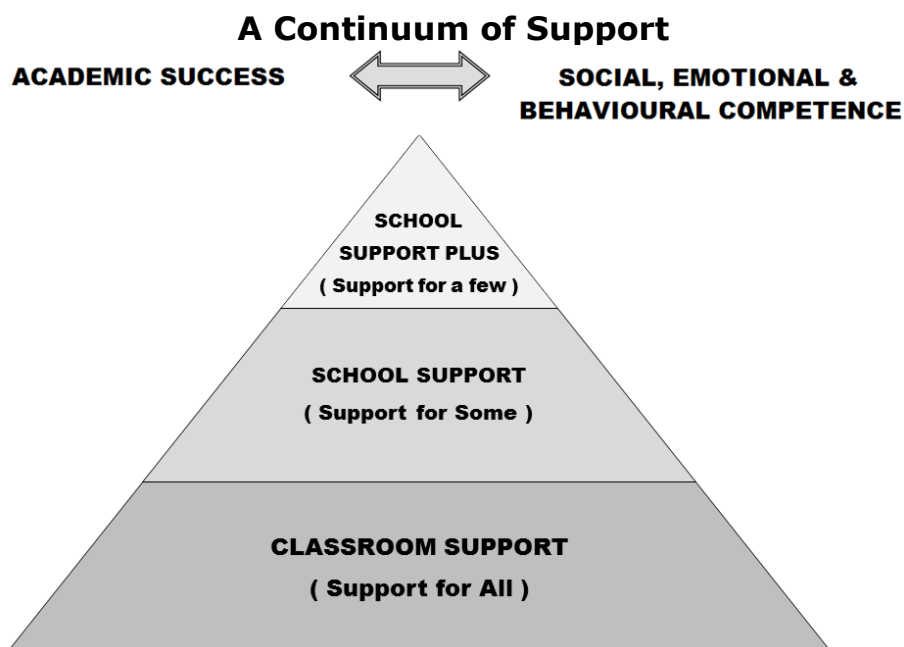
Ratified by the Board of Management on Monday 27th May 2019

Signed: _____ Chairperson

Signed: _____ Principal

Appendix 1

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



Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concern. We gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

SUPPORT PLAN*

Classroom Support
 School Support (Support for SOME)
 School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the Teacher(s)

For help, see 'SEN, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', *BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers* pp.71-74; *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers*, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

Student's Name:		Age:	
Lead Teacher:		Class/Year:	
Start Date of Plan:			
Review Date of Plan:			
Student's Strengths and Interests:			
Priority Concerns:			
Targets for the Student:			
Strategies to help the Student Achieve the Targets:			
Staff Involved and Resources Needed:			
Signature of Parent(s)/ Guardian(s):			
Signature of Teacher:			

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

*Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)*

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

For help, see 'SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'BESD: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers', 'Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools'.

Student's Name:	Class/ Year:	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review:	
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?		
Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan? If so, how?		
Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?		
Signature of teacher(s):		

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Outcome of Review (tick as appropriate):			
	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support		Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this review

Support Checklist		
Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information:	Date Checked:	Comments:
1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Consulted:		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered:		
3. Hearing:		
4. Vision:		
5. Medical Needs:		
6. Basic Needs Checklist Completed:		
7. Assessment of learning-screening:		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning:		
9. Observation of Behaviour:		
10. Interview with Pupil:		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		

Exceptional Ability & Giftedness Policy

Definition and Background:

'An able child is one that achieves or has the ability to achieve at a level significantly in advance of their peer group. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range'. (Eyre, 1999)

- Children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence (an IQ score of 130+, 98th Percentile)
- Giftedness is recognised as a 'disability' or special education condition in the Education Act (1998).

School Ethos:

We, the teaching staff at Robertson N.S., have agreed to cater for those pupils who are exceptionally able in **academic** areas (i.e. the top 2% of the school population).

Those pupils who show exceptional talent in **non-academic** areas e.g. psychomotor ability, mechanical aptitude, visual and performing arts ability, will be given information regarding the relevant outside agencies.

Procedure for identification of pupils with Exceptional Ability

Criteria for Assessment:

1. A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able pupils:
 - Annual standardised tests
 - NRIT
 - Psychological Assessments
 - Teacher observation
 - Parental requests
 - Referral by other individuals, schools or organisations.
2. From first class onwards, pupils who score on or above the 98th percentile in the Drumcondra Maths and English tests will then do the Non-Reading Intelligence Test, (NRIT), The British Picture Vocabulary Screening Test (B.P.V.S.) and the Otis Lenon Mental Ability test to gain a more definitive guide of their ability.
3. Where a teacher observes children displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic area, then further assessment may be carried out to establish giftedness.
Where it is a non-academic area, the parent will be informed of outside agencies more suited to the development of the pupil's giftedness.

Catering for Pupils with Exceptional Ability:

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able (IQ of 130+) will be catered for within the classroom based on a differentiated programme of work **or** if deemed possible by the Principal may be offered extension classes on a withdrawal basis, subject to the approval of the pupil and their parents.

These classes will form part of each Special Education Teacher's timetable where feasible.

Responsibility and Management:

1. The class teacher is responsible for differentiation within the classroom, including acquisition and distribution of teaching resources for differentiation.
2. The Special Education Teacher will be responsible for the assessment stage of this process, organisation of extension classes including timetabling (where applicable), acquisition and distribution of information regarding referral and assessment by outside agencies.
3. The Principal will liaise with parents, the S.E.T. and class teachers throughout the process.
4. According to guidelines for professional development, costs will be paid by thing B.o.M. to teaching staff who attend in-service training and courses about giftedness.

Implementation and Review

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

Ratified by the Board of Management on Monday 27th May 2019

English as an Additional Language Policy

Introduction

Robertson National School welcomes pupils of all nationalities and cultures, and its current enrolment includes children whose first language is not English. These pupils may be Irish nationals or they may have been born in another country. These children are entitled to support, where appropriate to help them learn English as their second, or additional language. They are referred to in this document as E.A.L. pupils, where E.A.L. stands for English as an Additional Language as this is the category of support they can access. This document sets out our policy in relation to the enrolment and education of these children.

Principles

- Our school supports the principle of inclusiveness
- Our school respects the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life of all its pupils
- All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfil this right, differences will be respected and valued in our school
- Our school will be pro-active in challenging racism
- Our school is committed to the principle of inter-culturalism, and seeks to actively promote an environment in which cultural differences can be explored and respected, where pupils can learn from each other, and where cooperative learning activities are employed across the curriculum

Enrolment of Overseas Pupils

- The school's Enrolment Policy governs enrolment of all pupils
- The enrolment procedure for non-national pupils is exactly the same as that for Irish pupils
- E.A.L. children are welcome to enrol in our school, provided there is a place in the appropriate class, in line with our enrolment policy
- Parents of E.A.L. children will be afforded help in completion of enrolment documentation, should they require it
- Every effort will be made to create a warm and welcoming environment for E.A.L. parents who approach the school to enrol their children

Education of Overseas Pupils

- E.A.L. pupils will be placed in an age appropriate class as far as possible

- Every effort will be made to help the pupils to settle socially in the class. Every effort will be made by all school personnel to help the child settle in his/her new environment
- The child will not be required to study Religion, should the child be non – Christian. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Religion time/assembly
- In general, as per Circular 12/96, if English is not the first language of the child, s/he may qualify for exemption from the study of Irish, and the school will complete the necessary documentation to obtain this exemption. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Irish time
- E.A.L. children will not be excluded from school tours and outings for any reason, financial or otherwise
- While we recognise that all new pupils need time to settle in and adjust, we require all pupils to adhere to the school's Code of Behaviour, in the interest of all. E.A.L. children enjoy the same rights and privileges, and the same responsibilities, as all other pupils

Provision of Supplementary English Support for E.A.L. Children

- The school currently has one temporary teacher working part-time to support the language needs of overseas pupils
- The E.A.L. teacher will assess children for support initially in consultation with Classroom Teachers and by completing assessments, to include the "Up and Away" programme of Placement Tests
- The E.A.L. teacher will devise a timetable of support for those E.A.L. pupils who require it, in collaboration with the Principal and Class Teachers
- The amount of supplementary teaching time allocated to any child will depend on his/her current command of the language, and his age
- In general, older pupils will be offered more support time, as there will be more pressure on them to attain mastery
- Supplementary teaching time will be offered on a one-to-one basis, or in a small group setting, depending on the needs of the child. This will be determined by the Class Teacher and E.A.L. Teacher
- This resource time may be offered on a withdrawal basis, or by the E.A.L. Teacher working with the child in his/her classroom. This will be decided by the teachers, based on the needs of the child
- The D.E.S. allows two years of language support for each child, and in general, the child's supplementary support will be phased out after this period
- The E.A.L. teacher will avail of in-service training in the provision of support to E.A.L. pupils where appropriate

Whole School Measures to ensure successful integration of E.A.L. pupils

Schools with an inclusive curriculum, which reflects and affirms diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion, will help to ensure that children from ethnic minorities feel valued and accepted. To promote appreciation of diversity, our school is committed to

- The delivery of an intercultural education to all pupils which is cross curricular, and which permeates the ethos of the school
- The provision of books that give a world view from a variety of perspectives and that portray characters from different ethnic backgrounds
- The provision of arts education experiences which reflects different experiences and cultures
- The effective delivery of the S.P.H.E. programme
- The affirmation of the languages and cultures which our overseas pupils bring with them
- The school will make every effort to combat racism, and this will be underpinned by the schools Code of Behaviour
- The school will encourage parents of E.A.L. pupils to become actively involved in school activities where parents play an important role

Implementation and Review

This policy is subject to review after 3 years, or as circumstances may warrant.

Policy was drafted in May 2019

Ratified by the Board of Management on Monday 27th May 2019