

St. Clare's Primary School, Manorhamilton

Whole School Plan For Special Needs

"Children with special needs will be educated in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Science to the Board of Management". The Board reserves the right to defer any enrolment until adequate resources are in place to cater for a child with specific needs.

Mission Statement:

Our aim is to enable the student to live a full, independent life and to realise his or her potential, as a unique individual through access to an appropriate, broad and balanced curriculum with the provision of educational supports deemed necessary.

Specific Aims:

- To enable these pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- To develop in these pupils positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning
- To enable these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners
- To involve parents in supporting their children through effective parent-support programmes

Definition of Special Needs

We understand the term Special Needs to be that as defined by the D.E.S. in Circular 8/99. Children with Special Needs are allocated Resource Teaching by the D.E.S. on the basis of reports furnished by appropriate specialists.

Principles

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Effective whole school policies and parental involvement
- Prevention of failure by provision of intensive early intervention
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need

Situation

3 Learning Support/ Resource teachers cater for the following:

School	General Allocation	Resource Hours
St. Clare's	1 post + 15 hrs	13.6 hrs
Masterson	10 hrs	0
Diffreen	0	8.5 hrs
Blacklion	0	3.4 hrs

Inclusion

In St. Clare's we respect, value and accommodate diversity. We support all pupils to access, participate in and benefit from an appropriate education. We seek positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all pupils.

To ensure that SEN pupils are integrated into the life of the school and the classroom, practical steps in place include

- SNA support as required to ensure the safety of the child where there is significant medical, sensory, physical or behavioural need
- The school is wheelchair accessible
- Modifications to the classroom layout and provision of resources required
- Teachers to familiarise themselves with the child's needs and it's implications for the class and to explain it to them.

Pupils are assisted in integrating into the life of the school and the classroom by

- developing their behavioural and social skills enabling them to develop and sustain relationships with peers.
- An inclusive curriculum differentiated to meet the pupils needs
- Buddy systems
- Participation in oral work
- Use of concrete materials
- Collaborative group work – peer support
- Project work – cross curricular

A list of strategies to integrate pupils with SEN will be kept by each teacher who is responsible for advising the SNA under his/her direction.

Enrolment of pupils with special needs

Prior to enrolment of a child with special needs, the Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report, or where such a report is not available will request that the child be assessed immediately. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in

establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special needs and to profile the support services required. Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs specified in the report. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to enrolment, request the Special Education Needs Organiser to provide the resources required to meet the needs of the child as outlined in the psychological and/ or medical report.

The school will meet with the parents of the child and with the SENO to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. Where necessary, a full case conference involving all parties will be held. This may include parents, principal, class teacher, resource teacher, Special Educational Needs Organisers (H.S.E and D.E.S) or psychologist as appropriate.

Children with special needs will be resourced in accordance with the level of resources provided by the Department of Education and Science to the Board of Management.

The School Board reserves the right to defer enrolment of pupils pending the availability of adequate resources if the Board has heard and considered concerns regarding the health and safety of either the enrolling pupil or the existing pupils in the school. The Board will be mindful of its duty of care in this regard.

Children enrolled in our school are required to co-operate with and support the school/Board of Management's Code of Behaviour as well as all other policies on curriculum, organisation and management. The BOM places Parents/ Guardians responsible for ensuring that their child will co-operate with said policies in an age- appropriate way. In accordance with the Department of Education's rules for National Schools a child may be suspended. All prospective parents/ guardians will be given a copy of the school Code of Behaviour and be requested to signify acceptance before enrolment proceeds.

Once enrolled, the resource teacher, class teacher and parents meet to discuss the needs of the child and agree on suitable targets for the IEP. New targets will be agreed at the beginning of each instructional term (12-20 weeks) in September and January.

Parent/ Teacher meetings are held in October. The parents meet both the class teacher and resource teacher. They have an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can support the learning of the pupil and the school.

Daily contact can be made through the school journal and an appointment can be set up if further communication is necessary.

Supervision

Yard supervision is carried out by three teachers at each break. A child who has access to an SNA will also have SNA supervision in the yard at all breaks.

Administration of medicines

Non-prescriptive medicines will not be stored or administered in the school. Prescribed medicines will not be administered without the written consent of parents and specific authorisation of the Board of Management.

Certain medicines such as inhalers used by asthmatics must be readily accessible at all times of the school day.

Where children are suffering from life-threatening conditions, parents should outline clearly in writing what can and cannot be done in a particular emergency situation, with particular reference to what may be a risk to the child.

All staff members have been trained in resuscitation and the use of a defibrillator.

Procedures for early identification/ screening/ referral of special needs pupils from within the school

Concerns about children arise in a number of ways

- Parents inform Principal or Class Teacher of a concern they have regarding their child
- Class Teacher's observation using checklists (ref. Westwood pg 22 behavioural/literacy/ numeracy) and Drumcondra English Profiles.
- Screening Tests – Bury Infant Check (Jun Inf) and M.I.S.T. (Sen Inf)
- Standardised Tests – Drumcondra Reading and Sigma –T together with NRIT

Any difficulties identified will be discussed by the Principal, Class Teacher and Resource Teacher. The parents will then be invited to a meeting where the difficulties will be communicated to them, and an individual approach to learning will be developed which will involve both the parent and the pupil.

A staged approach to intervention is initiated.

Stage 1 – Classroom Support

A plan is drawn up outlining the pupil's needs and actions taken including individualised teaching, management approaches and home based actions. This plan should be reviewed after one term. The outcome may be that the pupil continues to have a Classroom Support plan. If after reviews and adjustments the pupil is not making adequate progress, the School Support process is initiated.

Stage 2 – School Support

Further assessment and information gathered will inform the School Support Plan. The plan will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties and

define specific behavioural/learning targets. It will involve all the components from the Classroom Support level plus additional teaching from the learning support teacher.

If a review indicates that the pupil's progress is satisfactory, additional targets and a review date may be agreed.

If progress is less than expected, revised targets and adjustments to the strategies may be agreed and a new School Support Plan drawn up.

If a pupil's difficulties continue to create a significant barrier to his learning/socialisation, then his needs should be considered at School Support Plus level.

- For a child with more significant difficulties which are immediately recognised it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan

Stage 3 – School Support Plus

Appropriate external professionals are involved eg Visiting Teacher, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist.

Based on the information gathered from consultation and further assessment they collaborate with teachers in planning and monitoring interventions which take account of the pupil's strengths and address the identified needs.

Psychological Assessment

At the beginning of each year, a consultation with the NEPS psychologist takes place and a decision is made on which children are prioritised for assessment. The school is entitled to two assessments per year. We do not recommend assessing very young children. Our policy prioritises first time assessments, followed by re-assessment of children in 6th class then re-assessment of any other child after a period of four years. If a referral for assessment is necessary, the Special Needs Co-ordinator will arrange this. Forms will be filled out by the teacher(s) and parents giving details of test scores and observations on the child. The NEPS psychologist will conduct the assessment in the school following meetings with the parents and teacher. If Resource Hours or SNA support is recommended in the Assessment Report which follows, immediate application is made to the D.E.S. by the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

Upon allocation of Resource Hours the Resource Teacher and/or Class Teacher will meet the parents, child and other personnel who may be involved. They will draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The aim of the IEP will be to support as far as possible the integration of the child with special needs into the mainstream setting. The child will work with the Resource Teacher for the allocated time. A copy of the IEP will be given to the parents and the class teacher who have a specific role in achieving the targets. The SNA may also have a role. IEP's are reviewed by the teachers, parents and child at the end of each instructional term (12-20 weeks) and new targets and strategies are agreed.

If an assessment is deemed necessary and the parents will not agree, the Resource Teacher will continue to support the child with the parents' consent. Regular communication will be made between school and home and progress

will be monitored and discussed. It is hoped that with the passage of time and the building of trust that the parents will eventually allow their child to receive the appropriate interventions.

Further meetings over and above IEP and parent/teacher meetings may be initiated by the parents or the teacher if an issue arises or if progress is slower than expected.

The Special Needs Team meets each term to review the needs of all pupils in their caseload who are receiving support. This informs support for the following term and changes are made accordingly. The Special Needs Co-Ordinator then makes a report to the principal.

Order of children to receive Learning Support based on assessment

(In instances where the class teacher considers the test results not to be representative of a child's attainment, an alternative standardised test will be administered.)

- Children performing at or below the 10th percentile in standardised test of achievement in English.
- Senior Infants/ First Class – early intervention programmes for low achievers in English based on class teacher's observations and recommendations.
- Children performing at or below the 10th percentile in standardised test of achievement in Mathematics.
- Senior Infants/ First Class – early intervention programmes for low achievers in Mathematics based on class teacher's observations and recommendations.
- Children performing below the 20th percentile in standardised test of achievement in English.
- Children performing below the 20th percentile in standardised test of achievement in Mathematics.
- Children above the 25th percentile are not normally entitled to Learning Support.
- Arrangements for providing supplementary teaching to pupils in the senior section who experience very low achievement.

The duration of supplementary teaching should not exceed two to three years.

The maximum number of pupils in a teacher's caseload is approximately 30. Priority will be given to those pupils whose achievement is lowest in agreed standardised tests. Arrangements for providing frequent intensive supplementary teaching to the junior end of our school is a priority with 4/5 sessions each week.

Timetabling

Following consultation with the class teacher, each learning support teacher will draw up the timetable for her own caseload. She will incorporate one hour administration time each week into her timetable.

Class teachers of children with special education needs are asked to timetable subjects so that the child receiving Resource teaching misses as little classroom instruction as possible. Special attention is directed to the timetabling of Religion, Art, Music and Physical Education.

Monitoring Pupil Progress

The progress of each pupil should be monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the instructional term.

- Careful monitoring of a pupil's **oral reading** can provide information on reading rate and fluency, knowledge of sight vocabulary, knowledge of phonics and other word identification skills as well as reading comprehension.
- Analysis of a pupil's **writing** samples can provide information about the pupil's ability to construct sentences, present ideas in writing, spell words and write legibly.
- A **discussion** with a pupil about the procedures used to solve a mathematical problem can provide information about the pupils problem solving strategies.

Records of oral reading (running records), annotated writing samples, records of pupil conferences and other evidence of development should be retained by the learning support teacher for later review.

Day to day observations of a pupil's progress that are made during supplementary teaching should be recorded on the short term notes. Feedback from the pupil's class teacher and parents can be similarly recorded.

Record Keeping

The learning support teacher should maintain records of the outcomes of diagnostic assessment, of the agreed learning programmes and of pupil progress. The following is recommended:

- **An Individual Profile and Learning Programme** – completed for each pupil after the initial diagnostic assessment and revised following a review of progress at the end of each instructional term.
- **Long Term and Short Term planning records** for each pupil or group of pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching.
- Additional **records of pupil progress** such as records of oral language, records of oral reading errors, and work samples that can be used to track a pupil's progress and learning needs over time.

Continuing and discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

At the end of an instructional term an in-depth review of progress takes place. The purpose of this review is to determine whether or not agreed learning targets have been achieved and to decide on the level of supplementary teaching that should be provided in the following instructional term. This involves:

- Reviewing records of pupil's ongoing development and progress, including short term records.
- administering and re-administering diagnostic tests that might provide additional information about a pupil's progress or learning needs, and recording the outcomes in the pupil's Individual profile and Learning Programme.
- Discussing the pupil's progress with the class teacher focusing in particular on the outcomes of relevant learning activities specified in the IPLP
- Discussing the pupil's progress with his/her parents focusing on the activities that were implemented at home.

If it is decided that the pupil requires another term of supplementary teaching, the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme should be revised and updated with new targets and learning activities. A decision is made as to whether the pupil should continue to receive the same or a reduced level of supplementary teaching.

Where the targets have been met and the pupil on assessment is performing above the percentile laid down in the criteria for receiving learning support, supplementary teaching may be discontinued. This involves a discussion on the type of ongoing support which would be available to the pupil within his/her own classroom.

Intervention Programmes

Prevention Strategies

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties are

- Agreed approaches to language development and to teaching other aspects of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Implementation of a whole school parent involvement programme that focuses on developing children's oral language skills, shared books with children and developing their early mathematical skills.
- Implementation of paired reading programmes involving adults/parents and pupils in the school.

Early Intervention Programmes

Implementation of intensive early intervention programmes in the early primary classes as an effective response to meeting the needs of children with low achievement. These programmes will

- Be set within a specified time frame (13-20 weeks)
- Will be based on a shared expectation of success by everyone involved
- Involve small group teaching or one-to-one teaching
- Include a strong focus on oral language and laying the foundation for meaningful reading
- Emphasise phonemic awareness
- Engage the pupils in frequent supervised oral and silent reading of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty and monitor their comprehension.
- Stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- In mathematics they focus on language development and the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The role of learning support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all – The Board of Management, Principal, Learning Support/ Resource Teacher, Class Teacher, parents and children.

Role of Board of Management

- To oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision on learning support in our four cluster schools.
- To ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the LS/RT.
- To provide a secure facility for the storage of records in relation to pupils in receipt of special needs and learning support services.

Role of Principal

- To assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on learning support and special needs in co-operation with the other three schools in our cluster.
- To work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support and special needs.
- To monitor the implementation of the school plan on learning support and special needs on an ongoing basis and organise an annual meeting of the school principals of our cluster and the relevant LS/RT in the base school.
- To monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is provided in line with the criteria outlined.

Role of Special Needs Co-ordinator

- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating special needs services
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed in initiating referrals
- Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support and differentiation of the curriculum
- Co-ordinating the provision of special needs and liaising with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- Selection of children for support and allocation of children to Learning Support/ Resource Teachers.
- Maintaining a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching due to educational needs
- Arranging resources for special needs
- Arrange for psychological assessment with parental approval
- Discuss psychologists findings with parents and seek parental consent to make arrangements for additional educational provision for children with diagnosed special needs

Role of the Learning Support/ Resource Teacher

- Assisting in the implementation of a broad range of whole-school strategies designed to enhance early learning and to prevent learning difficulties
- Assessing and recording child needs and progress
- Setting specific time related targets for each child in consultation with the class teacher and parents (IEP) and the development of an individual profile and learning programme for each child in learning support
- Maintaining long and short term planning and progress record for each individual or group of pupils
- Direct teaching of the children, either in a separate room or in the classroom, individually or in a group
- Team-teaching
- Delivering intensive early intervention programmes and providing supplementary teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the junior section of the school
- Providing teaching in English and Mathematics to pupils in the senior section of the school who experience low achievement
- Co-ordinating the implementation of whole-school procedures for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in line with the selection criteria specified and input from teachers and parents
- Contributing to the development of policy on learning at the whole-school level and at the cluster level

- Providing advice to class teacher in such areas as individual pupil assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Advising class teachers in regard to differentiating the curriculum , teaching strategies, suitable textbooks, use of Information Technology and suitable software and a range of other related matters
- Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the children's interest ie psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teacher, special school or special class teacher
- Contributing at the school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resources , books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classes and in the learning support teacher's room
- Maintaining a list of pupils receiving supplementary teaching
- Home/school liaison – to meet the parents/guardians of all new entrants before they start school and to gather information on educational needs. To provide guidance to parents/ guardians on implementing activities designed to support the attainment of the learning targets set for their child.

Role of Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in her class including those selected for supplementary teaching in resource and learning support. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan 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
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching collaborate with the LS/RT in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
- With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement the following general approaches and methods are recommended
 - Group teaching
 - Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
 - Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
 - Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy

- Setting learning targets at the appropriate level
 - Providing learning activities and materials which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
 - Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
 - Setting up "buddy systems" in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers – peer tutoring – paired reading)
- A key role of successful learning support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the LS/RT. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of the Individual Profile and Learning Programmes

Role of the Special Needs Assistant

The Special Needs Assistant will engage in any activities considered by the class teacher to benefit the child to whom they are assigned. This may include yard supervision of specific pupil if deemed necessary.

N.B. Under no circumstances will the classroom assistant be left in sole charge of the class.

Monitoring and reviewing of policy

Monitoring of learning support / special needs is an ongoing procedure. A meeting will be held in the last term of each year with all the principals in the cluster and the Learning Support Teacher in order to review this policy.

Organisational Procedures (One to one system)

Procedures involved in the movement of children from the classroom to the learning support/resource room:

The following systems will be used

- Children from 3rd - 6th Class will proceed on their own to the Learning Support/Resource room at the appointed time.
- The L.S/R.T will collect children from Junior Infants - 2nd from their classroom.
- In the event of a child being absent, the class teacher will inform the L.S/R.T at the earliest opportunity. If the child is attending workshop activities, the L.S./R.T will liaise with class teacher to determine if the L.S./R.T will accompany the child to the workshop.
- If a child scheduled to travel to the learning support room on his own does not attend for supplementary at the expected time, the L.S./ R.T. will immediately contact the class teacher and inform the principal.

Where teaching takes place:

Where teachers are teaching on a one to one basis, an open door policy should be maintained at all times.

Supplementary teaching can take place in any of the following situations

- One to one in a Learning Support room
(Our policy does not encourage this method of intervention except in circumstances where it is unavoidable)
- Group teaching in a Learning Support room
- Group teaching in the classroom

In the event of a child being absent:

Attendance: The L.S/R.T's record daily attendance of pupils and in the event of a pupil not appearing at the time allocated, makes contact with the class teacher.

If a child or children attending the L.S/R.T are absent, the teachers may

- a) Prepare work for the absent child
- b) Work with or prepare work for other children
- c) Meet with the child's teacher if supervision cover is available
- d) Be allocated classroom or other duties by the principal

If the child receiving resource teaching is occupied in another activity (e.g. school drama, sport, workshop, etc.) the resource teacher must

- i. Accompany the child
- ii. (a), (b) or (c) above

Exceptionally Able Students

An exceptionally able student is one who is in the top range of 5-10% of the student population. He has the capacity for or demonstrates high levels of performance in an academic or non-academic area.

Identification An exceptionally able student is identified using a variety of methods :

- Assessment results (Drumcondra Reading, Sigma-T)
- Checklists – General and Subject-Specific
- Teacher referral
- Parent/Guardian referral
- Previous school, external agency or organisation

Provision for exceptionally able

Classroom Based :

In most cases the needs of exceptionally able students are best delivered as part of the normal differentiated classroom provision. Opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into all schemes of work.

1. **Differentiation** is planned for and organised in the classroom by
 - **Task** – A variety of tasks are set which relate to the same activity. Exceptionally able students can begin at a higher level, miss the first activities or move through the work at an increased rate.
 - **Outcome** – The same content, material, stimulus or task is used for all the students in the class. The outcome is not prescribed or the task is open ended.
 - **Resource** – All the class answering the same questions or researching the same information, but the resources used will be matched to ability. Exceptionally able students can use more demanding word banks, data, files or image banks.
 - **Support** – The support time available to exceptionally able students may be used to question the student, to encourage them to explore ideas more deeply, to introduce alternative ways of approaching the work or to explore extension into ICT systems.
 - **Dialogue** – Exceptionally able students often only need to have the basic outline of the work explained to them. This can be a quite sophisticated explanation which sets high expectations and assumes high levels of understanding. The use of targeted questioning to elicit high- level responses and small group discussions can also increase the challenge.
 - **Pace** – Exceptionally able students are often able to achieve complex tasks quickly and like to move rapidly through the early stages. In contrast, in creative or imaginative tasks, they may work more slowly and produce work of greater length, detail or complexity.
 - **Choice** – Given the opportunity to select work for themselves, students can choose activities that they find more interesting and that match their abilities. They can be given an opportunity to select from a range of starting points, materials, subjects or processes. They may also choose to extend or adapt the set work themselves.
2. Provision of extension textbooks in both literacy and numeracy
3. Homework is challenging for exceptionally able students and in some areas specific homework is set.
4. High expectations are set for the exceptionally able students
5. Exceptionally able students are grouped together for specific subjects eg maths or activities as appropriate.
6. Group work – may lead and guide group in practical work or take discussions beyond superficial level

7. Project work – teams visit classrooms and talk about their project
8. Modelling work – using students work as a model of good practice for the class.
9. Mentor/Buddy System – can provide extra level of support to junior classes or less able students
10. Positive Reward System creating an atmosphere where achievement is valued.
11. Access to laptop and directed in a way to further students knowledge using the internet. Interactive whiteboard and ICT equipment to further enhance skills.
12. Provide a wide range of reading materials, both novels and factual books.

School Based

1. Additional extra-curricular opportunities are provided in the school after school hours in music, creative and sporting activities.
2. Use of local library encouraged
3. The school actively promotes participation in quiz teams, football and hurling teams, poetry and drama both english and irish in local feiseanna, solo and group music in local scór and feiseanna, choir performances, school plays and musical, art competitions, writing competitions (handwriting, poetry, short stories), team building challenges and many more opportunities for students to excel.
4. Specialist visitors from the world of arts, science, technology etc
5. Workshops in the areas of literacy (poetry, story writing), art, music, drama,
6. Elderly members of the community brought in to impart knowledge and life skills on gifted students
7. Use of web cam to conference with other students of similar ability in another school. This could lead to group work that could be extended with physical visits.
8. Consult with organisations such as An Óige Thréitheach, Centre for Talented Youth.

Professional Development

At the beginning of each school year, in consultation with the teaching staff, the Principal identifies the key areas which will be of most benefit to the school as a whole. Throughout the year, suitable in-service education and training courses in these areas will be identified. Depending on demand and budget available, a percentage of the course fees and related expenses will be paid for by the Board of Management.

Croke Park hours are used to provide a range of in-service courses for all staff members in the school. Teachers are also encouraged to attend local seminars related to the areas prioritised in literacy, numeracy or special needs eg. dyslexia, speech and language, continuum of support etc.

Learning Support/Resource Teachers regularly attend in-service courses on special needs in the local Teachers Centre. Information from these courses is shared with class teachers.

Communication

Collaboration is very important between all parties involved in the child's education. The school encourages regular meetings and exchanges of information and opinions.

- Formal meetings between class teacher and learning support teacher take place at the beginning of each term after school time. Informal exchanges are on a regular basis.
- Class teacher / learning support teacher meet parents once every term after school time to discuss IEP/IPLP. Parent/teacher meetings provide a further opportunity for meeting. The school diary may also be used to communicate. Further meetings may be arranged as necessary.
- Learning support teacher may cancel her scheduled class to meet an outside professional during school time eg. psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, visiting teacher
- Learning support teacher or Principal may provide cover to enable class teacher to meet an outside professional during school time
- Teachers report to Principal on changes and developments on an ongoing basis as they occur.

Transfer to Post – Primary

In the second term the Principal, Deputy Principal and Special Needs teacher from St. Clare's Comprehensive School visit. Having obtained parental agreement, confidential information on the pupil with SEN is shared eg. his learning and other needs, results of Standardised Testing or school assessment tests and IEP's. With permission, psychological and other professional reports are passed on.

In February, the pupil with SEN and his peers attend an open evening for enrolment.

In the third term, an SESS programme is implemented to facilitate the smooth transition to post primary school. The LS/RT teacher with responsibility for a pupil with SEN explicitly teaches the pupil about post-primary school. The focus is preparing for change before it happens. Areas covered include

- Reading timetables / subject names / teacher names
- School map
- Giving different due dates for certain pieces of homework
- Recording homework in a journal after each subject
- Teaching key words for specific subjects (a transition literacy programme)
- Activities to cover areas such as

- What knowledge the pupil has already in relation to post-primary school
- Possible questions he may have
- Possible sources of help when he enters post-primary
- How he will be travelling
- The uniform that he will be required to wear
- Development of the pupils self esteem

Arrangements may be made with the post-primary school for the parent or the special needs teacher to take the child with SEN on a visit to the school independently.

For the purpose of subsequent discussion, it may be helpful to take photographs of the school, the rooms and the staff members who will be involved with the child.

In May, he attends the post - primary school for one day in preparation for September.

SPHE

Our SPHE programme assists in the successful integration of the special needs pupil into our school community.

SPHE provides opportunities for pupils to learn basic personal and social skills which foster integrity, self-confidence and self-esteem while nurturing sensitivity to the feelings and rights of others.

The school is proactive in promoting and exercising an inclusion of all children regardless of race, gender, culture or special needs at all times including break time.

Diversity within the school community is acknowledged, recognised and valued.

All children have equal access to the services, facilities and amenities in the school.

When teaching the Stay Safe Programme and Substance Use, maturity levels are taken into consideration and specific issues are managed in a sensitive way.

LS/RT teachers may support SPHE for special needs children and those with language difficulties. SNA's may support SPHE where appropriate.

Bullying prevention lessons are taught every half term.

Record Keeping

The LS/RT keeps a file of all the relevant information in a locked filing cabinet in her room eg. assessments by various professionals, test results, IEP/IPLP.

This information is shared with the class teacher. It is kept by the LS/RT for the duration of the child's stay in primary school after which it is stored in the attic.

The Class teacher also keeps his own records in a locked cabinet.