



JOHN SCOTTUS NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Special Educational Needs Policy

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Summary

The school vision for LS is that every child will achieve their full potential.

This policy explicitly recognises the special needs of children requiring learning support.

The Class Teacher retains the primary responsibility for the education of all the children in their class.

Learning support will take place in-class in so far as is beneficial to the child, taking account of their ability to learn in a whole-class setting.

Learning support is a collaborative process involving the child, the class teacher, parents and the Learning Support team

LS uses the 3-stage model

Every child in LS will have an individual plan. The plan will be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary, after 13 weeks of supplementary teaching.

A comprehensive case file will be maintained by the LS team for every child that requires Learning Support. This will include any tests/assessment results, the support plan and any reports from outside agencies and will be kept in the L.S Room. There will be regular contact between the relevant parties.

Vision

The vision is that every child with Special Educational Needs will progress in school so that they be encouraged, grow in self-confidence, and achieve their full potential socially and academically.

Ethos

JSS believes that every child is special has a unique divine spark. It is the job of educators, i.e. parents and teachers, to ignite this spark, so as the child may fulfill their potential.

LS Aims

1. To provide children with Special Educational Needs with the best possible care and education, with the available staff and resources
2. To outline and establish excellent procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with Special Educational Needs
3. To encourage full appropriate involvement of parents in the LS process
4. To establish clear communication structures for the full involvement of parents of pupils with Special Educational Needs
5. To promote an inclusive environment for children with Special Educational Needs
6. To promote a unified and effective approach by the staff as a whole to children with Special Educational Needs

Scope

The purpose of Learning Support is to help Class Teachers to identify child requiring LS and their needs, and to provide the necessary support to enable them to participate as fully as possible in school.

LS cares for the following categories of children:

Children with Special Education Conditions

Children experiencing difficulties with literacy and numeracy skills

Children for whom English is an additional language

Children at the younger end of the school learning to read. (These children are not regarded as being in LS.)

Roles and Responsibilities

“Department policy clearly indicates that regardless of what SEN a child may have, or who may be involved in supporting that need, the *classroom teacher retains the primary responsibility for the education of all the children in his/her classroom.*” - Dr. David Carey referring to Circular 02/05

Class teachers, parents, the LST, the Principal, the SNA, the Educational Psychologist and other relevant professionals are all also responsible for the welfare of the pupil.

Inclusion

Inclusion means that :

1. Every child with SEN for whom we have appropriate facilities and resources will be offered LS time, subject to approval(by the L.S team and principal)
2. All children are entitled to full respect, care and dignity
3. Every child with SEN will participate as fully as possible in all school activities
4. LS will take place in class in so far as this is best for the child

Practical steps taken to date:

- Every child is encouraged to participate in every activity
- Everyone is given an opportunity to speak at Assembly
- Everyone is given an opportunity to participate in concerts and on any team sport undertaken in school
- Children work in mixed ability groups
- Teachers differentiate and use a variety of teaching methodologies to facilitate access to the curriculum
- Emphasis is placed on the qualities of humanity which are fully expressed in various ways, in philosophy and SPHE
- Birthdays are celebrated (in the child's class)

Process

The Learning Support process will use the 3 stage model :

Stage 1: Identification of Needs & Classroom Support

Stage 2: School Support

Stage 3: School Support Plus

Class Teachers will endeavour to identify at the beginning of the year all children requiring LS. The L.S teacher will meet with the class teachers and decide on the level of support needed for the children identified. Depending on what stage the child is at , the relevant support plan will be drawn up and implemented

LS recognises the vital role of parents in the the LS process and will involve parents as much as possible in it.

Enrolment of Children joining the school with Special Educational Needs – [see Admissions policy]

Information on children with Special Educational Needs at enrolment: copies are requested of reports on the child including previous school reports.

The child meets the Class Teacher and spends some time in the classroom. – 1 or 2 days.

Where necessary, meetings are arranged between teachers, parents, SNAs, and other professionals, to identify the child's needs.

Health and Safety issues: SNAs, where available familiarise the child with the layout of the school.

Administration of medicines: see Health and Safety Policy.

Exceptionally Able Children: where possible lessons will be differentiated so that gifted children can reach a deeper and higher level in the subject.

In relation to any enrolment difficulties, the Principal communicates the problem(s) to the parent(s).

The Board of Management is informed by the Principal if the child cannot be enrolled because of lack of resources.

Early identification/screening/referral of Special Educational Needs pupils from within the School

The need is generally seen first by the parent or teacher by observation or using relevant checklists with indicators

The following publications will be very valuable to Class Teachers in helping identify SEN and in planning an appropriate response:

Special Education Needs - A Continuum of Support (NEPS)
 Special Education Needs - A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers (NEPS)
 Guideline on the Individual Educational Process (NCSE)
 Behavioural, Emotional & Social Difficulties (NEPS)
 Learning Support Guidelines (National Reading Initiative)

If a child is identified as having difficulties, then the school follows the Staged Approach. The following is a summary. Full details are in the above-mentioned documents.

“Stage One/Classroom Support is implemented when someone has reason to suspect the child might have a Learning Difficulty. In this Stage, the class teacher provides whatever minor assessment and intervention maybe necessary. The class teacher or parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a certain pupil. The teacher should then administer screening measures, which may include screening checklists and profiles for pupils in senior infants and first class, standardised, norm-referenced tests for older pupils and behavioural checklists where appropriate (if desired, the class teacher should consult with the LST regarding screeners, checklists and/or advice regarding action to be taken regarding the initial intervention)

The **class teacher** should then draw up a short, simple plan for extra help to be implemented within the normal classroom setting, in the relevant areas of learning and/or behavioural management. The success of the classroom support plan should be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations to the plan, the special education support team or the learning support/resource teacher in the school may be consulted about the desirability of intervention at Stage II.

Stage Two/School Support is implemented when the interventions that have been put in place to support the child in Stage One have failed. In Stage Two, the child is referred to the Learning Support Team for further (diagnostic) testing, this is done only

with parental permission. If it is deemed appropriate, then supplementary teaching is provided by the Learning Support Team. The class teacher and parents are involved in the drawing up of the learning programme.

Stage Three/School Support Plus of the process is implemented, if after a number of reviews and adaptations to the learning programme there are still significant concerns, it may then be necessary to provide interventions at Stage Three.

“In this Stage, more intensive assessment is undertaken to ascertain if there is a special education condition present. Like Stage Two, this stage is implemented only with parental permission.” (Carey, Dr. David J., p174, 2005).

If a parent refuses intervention which has been recommended by the class teacher, the Principal needs to be consulted as does the NEPS psychologist.

Where professional help is required, the Principal makes contact with NEPS or an equivalent organisation and avails of their expertise. Please refer to **Circular Special Ed 02/05** for further information on The Staged Approach.

Children with Low incidence needs, who have been Low-incidence teaching hours, receive LS priority.

All children in 1st to 6th Class undertake Drumcondra Tests in Reading Comprehension, Spelling and Maths.

Mist Tests are administered to Senior Infants. From these results, the LS team prioritise children with High Incidence needs for their caseload.

Consent is sought from parents prior to intervention. EAL children’s parents are informed in writing

Intervention Programmes:

Wherever possible, support teaching is provided by the Learning Support Team in the mainstream classroom, or in small groups. This is to promote inclusion with peer groups and to benefit from a mixed ability environment. However, in some cases it is more effective to withdraw the student for one to one tuition.

The Staged Approach is not applicable to Junior Infant children unless they have been identified prior to coming to school as having SEN

Planning Assessment and & Evaluation

LS will prepare an annual LS department plan at the beginning of the year.

LS will review the LS plan termly.

There will be an plan, for every child receiving LS. The plan will be SMART-based: specific objectives, measurable, attainable/realistic, relevant and time-bound. Parents will be invited to be involved in all plans

LS will review the progress of every individual plan regularly.

An IEP is a collaborative document, where the Class Teacher, LST and parents are involved in drawing up a plan. Where appropriate, a multi disciplinary team, SNA and the student themselves are also involved. Please refer to the documents mentioned above regarding suggested contents of an IEP.

Children utilising LS have an IPLP/ILP (Individual Profile and Learning Plan/Individual Learning Plan) which records interventions and targets for the individual child. This document is drawn up by LS in collaboration with the class teacher.

Occasionally, there may be a need to draw up an Individual Behaviour plan for a child with specific needs in this area. This is also a collaborative document.

Records

LS will keep comprehensive up-to-date records on every child receiving LS, which will be kept under lock-and-key in a press in the L.S./ Resource Rooms. The case-file will contain the assessment and reports, the plan, a review (of progress) against plan and a record of meetings.

LS will maintain a summary record of all children in LS.

When a student with SEN has transferred to another school, records will be passed to the child's parents and directly to the new school only with parents' written consent.

Communication & Reporting

LS recognises that effective and regular communication between the relevant parties is an essential part of the process, and that there is an explicit need to involve parents in the LS process.

LS will communicate with parents and Class Teachers as often as necessary.

LS will provide the Principal with a monthly report.

Transfers to 5th & 6th Class and to Post Primary

5th and 6th Class occupy the same building as the Secondary School. This transition is therefore greatly assisted, since they are already used to the workings of the school as a whole, though not with the particular demands of the Secondary Curriculum.

Children moving over from 4th to 5th Class, coming to a new building: this transition is eased by a visit to the building in June, meeting those in the current 5th and 6th Class, refreshments, a tour of the building, meeting the Class Teachers, and the Principal of the Secondary School. Parents are also invited to separate meetings at around the same time to explain the difficulties they may have.

Records are passed from the Junior to the Senior School building and there is liaison between the Learning Support Team for 5th and 6th Class.

Professional Development

The Board of Management and the Principal recognise the importance of Continuous Professional Development, encourage and support CPD for all teaching staff.

