

Rineen N.S.



Special Education Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up by the teaching staff and parents of Rineen National School. It was ratified by the BOM.

Guiding Principles

We want all children to feel that they are a valued part of the school community. We do this through inclusion which has at its core, the following principles:

- All our children 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 resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs, will be used to facilitate the development of a truly 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*.
- 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.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide practical guidance to staff, parents and other interested parties about our SEN procedures and practices.
- outline the framework for addressing additional needs in our school.
- comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act, 2000)

- fulfil DES circular 0013/17 -Circular to the Management Authorities of all Mainstream Primary Schools; Special Education Teaching Allocation, and new 2017 Guidelines for Primary Schools: Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools.

- Fulfil DES circular 0054/2022: Exemptions from the Study of Irish

Relationship to School Ethos

Rineen N.S. strives to create learning opportunities for all children and that commitment underpins all school planning and policy documents. Our school is dedicated to the implementation of an effective system for meeting the needs of all our pupils in accordance with our mission statement, the resources provided by the DES and the Board of Management. We believe that all our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to their individual needs. We strive to ensure that all our children feel that they are a valued part of our school community. We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion. This policy aims to enable children with Special Education Needs (SEN), 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 the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them

Aims and Objectives

- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- To allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all the partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties are:

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the mainstream class teacher to cater for individual strengths and needs.

- Development of 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 numeracy skills to pupils who need it.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties.

Enrolment of children with identified special educational needs (Refer to Admissions Policy)

- The principal will organise a pre-enrolment meeting between concerned parties with a view to establishing his/her specific needs.
- The school will follow the procedure as outlined in the school Admissions Policy as follows; *Parents who wish to enrol children with specific needs are required to furnish the school with all the relevant documentation including medical and/or psychological reports. Following receipt of the reports and prior to the enrolment of the child, the Board of Management will assess the resources needed to fulfil the educational and/or training needs of the child. The Board will request the Department of Education and Skills to provide such resources.*
- The principal will establish contact with Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO), psychologist/ speech therapist/occupational therapist and other relevant agencies.
- The Board of Management will refer to guidelines set out in the EPSEN Act and the Education Act when considering the enrolment of a pupil with special needs:

*(EPSEN Act) "A child with special educational needs **shall** be educated in an **inclusive** environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with -*

 - a) The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act, or*
 - b) The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated"*
- Health and Safety issues will be identified by the principal and the class teacher with the input of the parents and the suitability of such things as access, toilets, supervision and administration of medicine will be considered.

Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support

Stage 1: Classroom Support

- The class teacher or parent may observe weaknesses in the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a child.
- The class teacher will use teacher observation, checklists/profiles, infant screening tests and norm-referenced standardised maths or English tests. Behavioural checklists will also be used by the class teacher where appropriate.
- The school uses the B.I.A.P & MIST screening tests for infant classes and the Micro-T, Sigma-T, CAT, Drumcondra Spelling Test and WRAT/WIAT for screening of older classes.
- The class teacher will consult with parents on the parents' experience of the child's progress and suggest ways the parent can help support the child's work at home.
- A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review. The class teacher will observe the child's progress and consult with the parent. If the child does not progress following additional support in the classroom then the child can be provided for under school support.

Stage 2: School Support

- The teacher will already have made concerns known to the parent and will now request a meeting together with the S.E.T.
- The S.E.T. will perform diagnostic testing on the child to assess the areas of greatest learning need. This may include diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy, formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures, and functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The S.E.T. will draw up a support plan in consultation with the class teacher and parents.
- A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition.
- The S.E.T. will seek consent from the parent/guardian for the child to attend learning support sessions.
- The support plan will be reviewed by the S.E.T. and targets set for the next instructional term.
- The child's progress is assessed by class teacher observation, S.E.T. observation, parent observation and testing.
- A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

- A child is moved to stage three if the child fails to reach predefined targets and fails to progress in their area of need.
- This decision is a consensus from the class teacher, S.E.T., principal and parents.

Stage 3: School Support Plus

- The school may formally request a consultation from other professionals outside the school in respect of children who fail to make sufficient progress after supplementary teaching or the implementation of a behavioural programme, as appropriate. Such professional advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists, occupational therapists etc. This is carried out in consultation with and with the permission of the child's parents/guardians.
- If the school thinks that a child is in need of a psychological assessment the principal will contact NEPS and consult with an educational psychologist.
- Following consultation with outside professionals the class teacher, S.E.T., parents and outside professional (if available) will draw up a School Support Plus plan for the child.
- The S.E.T. will meet with the class teacher, principal, parents and S.N.A. on a regular basis to review the child's progress and set new targets.
- The school encourages all children to participate fully with the Irish curriculum, in particular the oral language aspects which are readily accessible to most children. The exemption of Irish may be a necessity for some pupils. Please see the Exemption of Irish policy for more information.

Identifying and selecting children for additional teaching support

Children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest level of supports. Selection criteria

The following criteria will be used by our school to select children for supplementary teaching in line with the new model of Special Education Teaching (Circular 13/2107).

- Children who experience significant and persistent learning, social or emotional difficulties
- Children performing below the 10th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in English.
- Children performing below the 10th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in maths.
- Senior Infants/First/Second class - early intervention programmes for low achievers in English based on class teacher's observations and recommendations.
- Senior Infants/First/Second class - early intervention programmes for low achievers in maths based on class teacher's observations and recommendations.

- Children performing below the 20th percentile in standardised tests achievement in English.
- Children performing below the 20th percentile in standardised tests of achievement in maths.
- Priority is given to those in the junior section of the school (senior infants to second class).
- Children who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and whose English needs further support.

Planning and Implementing a Support Programme

The School Support Plan aims to set out the child's learning strengths and areas of greatest need. It presents all information gathered on the child's learning, assessments to date and recommendations from specialist bodies.

The Support Plan should include the following:

- The nature and degree of the child's abilities, skills and talents.
- The nature and degree of the child's special educational needs and how these needs affect his or her educational development.
- The present level of educational performance of the child.
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the child to enable the child to benefit from and to participate in the life of the school.
- The child's priority learning needs.
- The child's agreed learning targets and an agreed time limit for these targets to be achieved by.
- A child with access to an SNA should also have a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) developed by the class teacher in collaboration with the SNA, S.E.T., the child's parents/guardians and principal. The plan should include time-bound targets for the development of independence skills and be reviewed regularly.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- At the end of each instructional block/term the progress of each child who is in receipt of support teaching will be evaluated following consultation with the child's class teacher and where appropriate, the child's parents/guardians.
- A decision will be made regarding their continued level of support and revised targets will be set in their Support Plan.

- The school may decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children when satisfactory progress has been made and targets have been met.
- The school may also decide to discontinue supplementary teaching with some children who are now performing above the percentile laid down in the selection criteria for receiving support; however, if both the class teacher and support teacher feel such a child needs scaffolding to maintain this standard then continued supplementary teaching may be offered if places are available in the appropriate group

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the provision of SEN in the school and has a co-ordinating role between class teachers, the S.E.T., Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), parents and outside bodies. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with the SEN co-ordinator 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.

The Class Teacher

The class teacher has responsibility for the education of SEN pupils in his/her class, is involved in differentiating the curriculum and directs the work of the SNA. The class teacher will:

- Provide effective teaching and learning opportunities at Rineen N.S. Support the identification of learning difficulties.
- Provide Classroom Support/Stage 1.
- Communicate with parents/guardians.
- Draw up Classroom Support Plans. (Stage 1 Continuum of Support)
- Collaborate with the S.E.T. in the development of a Support Plan for each child who is in receipt of supplementary teaching at School Support/School Support Plus Level on the Continuum, by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets.

- A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and cooperation between the Class Teacher and the S.E.T. Central to this frequent consultation and collaboration. This consultation will be achieved through formal timetabling once per week

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/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
- Developing a Support Plan for each child who is selected for supplementary teaching, in consultation with class teachers and parents.
- Maintaining a short-term plan and progress record, or equivalent, for each individual or group of children withdrawn for support teaching.
- Maintaining a short-term and progress record (together with the class teacher) for in-class support.
- Administering a range of formal and informal assessments and maintaining records of them.
- Recording the log of actions in the Support Plan.

Special Needs Assistant

The Special Needs Assistant or S.N.A. is assigned duties by the principal teacher in accordance with D.E.S. guidelines and sanctioned by the Board of Management. His/her work will be supervised either by the principal or by a class teacher. The role of an

SNA will be to carry out duties based on the care needs of the child. The tasks associated with these duties can be of a primary or secondary nature. (Circular 0030/2014).

The primary care support tasks may include:

- Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
- Assistance with mobility and orientation.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds, and at recreation, assembly and dispersal times.
- Assisting children while at play as appropriate.
- Provision of non-nursing care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
- Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a child from a classroom when essential.
- Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
- Assistance with severe communication difficulties including enabling curriculum access for children with physical disabilities or sensory needs and those with significant, and identified social and emotional difficulties.

The secondary care support tasks may include:

- Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms or assisting a child who is not physically able to perform such tasks; to prepare and tidy a workspace, to present materials, to display work, or to transition from one lesson activity to another.
- Assistance with the development of Personal Pupil Plans (PPP) for children with Special Educational Needs, with a particular focus on developing a care plan to meet the care needs of the child concerned and the review of such plans.
- Assistance with maintaining a journal and care monitoring system for children including details of attendance and care needs.
- Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements associated with particular activities.
- Attending meetings with Parents, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENO); National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS); or school staff meetings with the agreement and guidance of Class Teacher/Principal.
- Assistance with enabling a child to access therapy or psycho-educational programmes such as anger management or social skills classes, under the direction of appropriate personnel.
- Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, or visits, where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff

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. 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.

The Parents/Guardians of the pupils of Rineen N.S. can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- 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.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- 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 school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.
- Supporting programmes supplied by outside agencies (e.g. Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist etc.) which will help the child achieve the current aims of their Support Plan.

Role of External Bodies and Agencies

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Early Intervention Teams, School Age Teams, Tusla and the Inspectorate. We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate

meetings between parents and various support services. We also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

Resources

The S.E.T. decides on the purchase of resources based on a child's priority learning needs and these purchases are discussed with the principal before a decision is made.

Inclusion

The school ensures that children with special needs are included in the life of the school 'as far as possible.'

Communication

Informal discussion between staff on issues arising from special needs provision, as well as formal meetings take place on a regular basis (usually weekly) between staff members on such issues as timetabling, assessing pupils' progress and setting new learning targets.

Code of Behaviour

The class teacher will ensure that children with special educational needs are given clear instruction on school rules. The class teacher will make the children particularly aware of rules surrounding safety issues where their learning difficulty may impair their ability to perceive danger.

Transfer to post-primary

The principal will consult with the parents and the relevant S.E.N.O. to ensure that the transition from primary to post-primary be as smooth as possible for the child and his/her family.

Record Keeping

- Records of the child's assessments from outside bodies, support plans, records of screening and diagnostic testing are held by the school in a secured filing cabinet.
- The principal, class teacher, S.E.T., SENO, psychologist, inspector and parents have access to the child's file.
- The class teacher, S.E.T. and principal contribute to this file.

- The file is kept in the school indefinitely.

Timetabling

Timetabling is done through a collaborative approach between the S.E.T., class teachers and principal. Every effort is made to ensure that children are not removed from the same curricular area each day. Due recognition is taken of the specific needs of each child.

Out of School Trips

School trips can be a regular feature of Rineen N.S. Permission forms in relation to the proposed trips and for seeking medical assistance in the event of an accident are sought from parents. A number of contactable mobile phone numbers are held by staff. SNAs are issued with clear instructions as to their duties for the day.

Monitoring

The school will evaluate the effectiveness of Special Needs Provision through monitoring standards reached, case samples from children, the views of parents, staff feedback and continued levels of intervention.

Ratification and Communication

This policy is to be circulated to:

- All teaching staff
- Parents
- Special Needs Assistants

Other Issues

1. The school is wheelchair friendly.
2. The school has a Safety Statement and an Administration of Medicines Policy.
3. The school promotes a positive school environment through SPHE.

Success Criteria

The success of our Special Needs Policy will be indicated by:

- Inclusion of pupils with special needs into our school
 - Progress of pupils with special needs in our school
 - Parents comments and feedback
 - Feedback from teaching staff, Special Needs Assistant, pupils, psychologists
 - Inspector's Report
 - Testing
-

This policy was discussed by the staff and principal of Rineen N.S. and ratified by the Board of Management and is effective as and from _____.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains relevant and reflective of school practice.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date : _____