

St Brendan's NS

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St. Brendan's NS Special Educational Support Policy 2022

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1. Introduction:

The Department of Education and Skills introduced a revised allocation model for all mainstream schools with effect from September 2017 and again in 2021. St. Brendan's NS has been allocated 3 full-time and one shared SEN teachers (7.5 Hours shared with other school/schools). In keeping with Special Education Circular 0013/2017 we have updated and revised our SEN policy to make full and productive use of the revised Resources and to ensure that our school becomes a truly inclusive school. This policy was formulated in January 2018, after a consultation process that included SEN and mainstream teachers and reviewed in 2022, when exceptional circumstances relating to Covid and the enrolment of Ukrainian pupils fleeing war has resulted in an additional allocation of EAL and CLASS hours to the school.

2. Rationale:

Special Educational Needs are defined in the "Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004" as follows: 'A special education need refers to a person who has a restriction in capacity to participate in, and benefit from education, due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health, or learning disability, or any other condition (including exceptionally able pupils) which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.' For the purposes of this policy, we define inclusion as 'The process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by considering and adapting its curricula, organisation and provision.' The goal of inclusion is not to erase differences, but to enable all pupils to belong within an educational community that validates and values their individuality. Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs should 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.

3. Guiding Principles:

- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs.
- Special education teaching supports provided to St. Brendan's NS should be used solely for the support of pupils with identified special educational needs, including those pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). The special education teaching supports will not be used to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio in mainstream classes. Neither will they be used to allow any special education teacher sole responsibility for the delivery of any curriculum subject to any particular class.
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need should have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils should be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support.
- We have previously established and will maintain a core team of teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All members should have the necessary experience and access to continuing professional development to support the diverse needs of pupils with special educational needs.
- It is our policy to match each SEN teacher to a particular class or age-group where possible to allow for greater collaboration between mainstream and SEN teachers, to make time-tabling of in-class support easier and to ensure that pupils are not experiencing over-load and confusion that arises when too many teachers work with a class.

4. Aims:

- (a) To identify and respond to needs as early as possible
- (b) To ensure that the pupils with the greatest level of needs will get the greatest level of support
- (c) To establish and maintain a clear identification processes
- (d) To ensure careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs.
- (e) To use an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process approach to identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes.

- (f) To ensure that interventions should draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers.
- (g) These interventions should reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests.
- (h) In order to achieve this, all teachers should:
 - a. Plan for assessing pupils' attainment of the intended learning objectives of the lesson, or series of lessons, using both assessment of learning and assessment for learning
 - b. Maintain assessment records that are clear, useful and easy to interpret and share
 - c. Meaningfully differentiate content and activities in order to cater for the varying needs and abilities of pupils
- (i) All pupils should be enabled to:
 - a. Engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities
 - i. Grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive
 - b. Reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning
 - c. Experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning

5. Terminology

We will cease using the terms EAL/Resource/Learning Support teachers and refer to all our support teachers as **SEN teachers or SETs**

File types to be renamed as follows:

- a) Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) now to be called **Support Plan Plus**;
- b) Pupils previously in receipt of Learning Support or EAL will now have a **School Support Plan**;
- c) Children for whom class lessons need to be differentiated, but do not need additional intervention, will have a **Classroom Support Plan**

All pupils in the three categories above must have a file call a **Support File** which is opened by the classroom teacher and/or the SEN teacher.

The **Records Room** (Room 23) is the name given to our dedicated, locked storage room in which all of the above files must be kept.

6. GDPR/Record-Keeping

Our SEN files ie Pupil Support Files will be stored centrally in our designated Records Storage Room and also stored electronically on a dedicated memory key/hard drive which will also be stored in the Records Room, with a copy kept in a locked cabinet in the Principal's Office.

As laid down by our Records Retention Schedule, all SEN files, including parental permission slips must be kept indefinitely.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force on the 25th May 2018. The following applies to St. Brendan's NS and our data as part of GDPR:

- Personal data must be fairly and lawfully processed.
- Accuracy - Personal data must be accurate and kept up to date.
- Security - Personal data should be kept secure in terms of encryption and accessibility.
- Data should be kept for no longer than is necessary.
- Individuals rights must be ensured - right of access to information, right to rectification.

- Information is only shared with those who need it.

We will adhere to the following in relation to SEN filing:

- Electronic (word doc) support files are password protected by the author.
- Support files are shared with parents and agreed by parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians are asked to sign support files.
- Protected support files are uploaded to school administrative system "Aladdin" with access only to staff that work with that child at that particular time.
- A hardcopy of the Classroom Support file is kept in a locked press in the child's classroom and the Principal's office.
- A hardcopy of the school support and school support plus files are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the SETs and/or class teacher's room during the year and transferred to the locked filing cabinet in the Record Room at the end of the year.
- The Aladdin school administrative system will be used from 2020 to store digital copies of professional reports and referral forms are scanned and added to the school administrative system 'Aladdin' as password protected PDFs; only relevant staff have access.
- Hard copies of professional reports and referral forms are kept in locked cabinets in the COS teachers classroom and the principal's office.
- SEN files should never be stored on personal electronic devices. All files on school laptops need to be password protected and should be deleted in June after the electronic file is submitted to the SEN Co-ordinator.

Aladdin note on GDPR-The total security of your data is of the utmost importance to us and we partner with the global industry leaders to ensure this is the case. We use Google to store your school information in data centers within the EU that are independently audited and certified to international standards. Aladdin has superior data security with extended SSL encryption and this means that even if Aladdin is accessed across an unsecured wireless connection the data is fully protected. Aladdin eliminates the chance of physical loss and theft of your data and this, along with our other certified security measures, enhances your school's compliance with data protection law.

Your unique username and password gives you secure access to information relevant to your role. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Secretary will have access to all student records and more advanced school wide functions. Class teachers will only see students in their own class and SEN teachers will only see the students they teach. The school has complete control over each staff member's level of access with a variety of options to choose from such as non-academic access, special access to tests, special access to money, view all access... to name a few.

7. Child Protection

When there are known Child Protection issues related to SEN pupils, a blue sticker will be attached to the front of the file denoting that there are further records available under lock and key in the Principal's Office. Only the DLP has access to these records. Electronic files with child protection information will password-protected and given a specified identifier on the Aladdin System. The secretary in consultation with the DLP and Deputy DLP will assign the necessary protection levels.

8. Role of the SEN Co-Ordinator (Deputy Principal Carmel Kenny)

The SEN co-ordinator will:

- Take overall responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of the SEN files
- Maintain a list of pupils receiving support both in-class, one-to-one or in small groups
- Set timeframes/deadlines for Student Support Files to be prepared or reviewed

- Organise standardised testing throughout the school, collate and analyse the results and upload requested data to the DES' POD database
- Organise SEN team meetings, at least once a month and more frequently when required and maintain minutes of the decisions taken
- Organise a lockable Filing Cabinet for each classroom- in keeping with the school's Data Protection Policy
- Design and maintain school SEN templates for Support Plans, Pupil Personal Profiles, Physical Intervention Records, SNA timetables, SEN timetables etc and update these as necessary
- Maintain a target list and ensure that all pupils receive support in accordance with their needs
- SEN Co-ordinator in conjunction will have the final decision on how SEN resources are allocated and to whom
- Maintain a library (physical and digital) of available books, programmes, tests, support materials etc in the school
- Advise the Principal on the purchase of new resources as the need arises
- Collaborate with the Principal and SEN team towards the formation and evaluation of our school SEN Policy and all other related policies including:
 - SEN Policy
 - SNA policy
 - Enrolment Policy in relation to SEN
 - Assessment Policy
 - Inclusion Policy
 - Manual Handling Policy
 - Physical Intervention Policy
 - Bus Escort Policy
 - Intimate Care and Toileting
- Identify needs and suggest attendance of SEN team members at relevant CPD courses as they arise throughout the year
- Keep up-to-date with SEN literature, research and developments and ensuring the dissemination of this information to the school staff and SEN team in particular.

9. St. Brendan's NS SEN Main Procedures and Deadlines:

- Two weeks at the end of June and one week at the beginning of September will be allocated to SEN teachers to facilitate testing, allocating programmes of work, deciding on timetables, facilitating SEN team meetings, data collection, File management and forward planning for SEN pupils
- June:
 - Standardised Test results analysis will be completed in June by the SEN co-ordinator
 - The SEN co-ordinator/Junior Infant teacher/Principal will meet with the parents of any newly enrolled pupils who have been flagged as having additional needs during the enrolment process. Other schools/agencies will be contacted to build up a complete picture of potential needs.
 - The co-ordinator will complete a class by class list of target pupils, identifying the category of need (according to the categories on the POD database) and allocate these pupils to a SEN teacher in conjunction with the Principal's staff allocation process
 - A meeting of the SEN team is called in June to discuss the target list and the SEN co-ordinator will make adjustments to the allocation of pupil to SEN teacher, if necessary and in consultation with the Principal.
 - All relevant SEN templates are available on Aladdin and
 - More targeted assessment and needs analysis will take place if required in June or September

- In June, SEN teachers in collaboration with class teachers are required to file work samples, test results, support plans and all other relevant documentation in each child's record file in the Record Room. This applies to both mainstream and SEN pupils. This should include:
 - Free writing at start of year and end of year
 - Test results
 - Draw a man test
 - Reading record/dolch/ tricky words
 - Other relevant work samples
- September:
 - SEN timetables are produced in consultation with the class teacher and SEN co-ordinator
 - Permission slips should be signed and collected from parents
 - Programmes of work should be continued for existing pupils in line with Support Plans that were updated the previous February
 - New programmes should match the targets set in the previous review
 - Checklists and testing should be carried out on new pupils
- On-going Support Plans should to be updated in October and in February
- PPPs are updated annually in December
- Sigma T and Micra T standardised testing in May/June for whole school;
- NRIT in 2nd and 4th classes in Feb/March; MIST in senior infants in Feb/March
- BCC target- Behaviour/Conditions/Criteria; Only 3 or 4 targets at a time for pupils in Learning Support- list of needs but dealing with 3 or 4 targets only at a time

10. Time-tabling

The Principal in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator will allocate specific time for in-class support per class level, to ensure the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support.

- Children are prioritised for support, based on criteria outlined in this document.
- SEN teachers will draft timetables in consultation with SEN coordinator, the SEN team and the Principal.
- The class teacher, the SEN co-ordinator and the Principal will be given a copy of each SEN teacher's timetable and same is accessible on school planning website.
- Positive and consistent communication with the SEN team is required to ensure that timetabling is successfully implemented.
- If pupils are being withdrawn, care must be taken to ensure that pupils are not missing the same subject on a regular basis e.g. withdrawal after lunch time. Children should not be withdrawn during SPHE lessons.
- Timetables are reviewed regularly in line with target reviews and planning meetings.

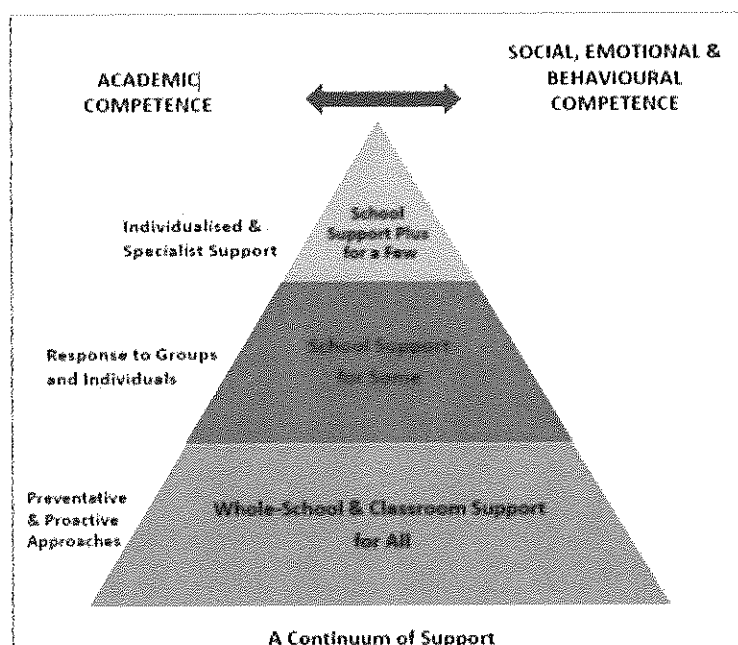
11. SEN Planning

We will use a 3-step approach:

1. Identify needs
2. Plan to meet the needs- level of support required
3. Monitor and record outcomes

12. Identifying needs

We will use the Continuum of Support framework to identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties.



The process involves the class teacher, special education teachers, SEN co-ordinator, parents, the pupil and relevant external professionals as required.

When concerns are initially raised by either the class teacher, parent or SEN teacher, a support file will be opened by the class teacher or SEN teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator.

We will have 4 levels of support files as follows:

- Classroom Support Plan – opened by the class teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator and parents
- School Support Plan- opened by the SEN teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, class teacher, parents . This may be a follow-on from the original Classroom Support Plan.
- School Support Plan Plus- opened by the SEN teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, the class teacher, parents and outside professionals where relevant.
- Pupil Personal Plans for any child with access to SNA support

Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time-frame for review.

Classroom Support	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. 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>
School Support	At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by:

	<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 including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time 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 are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation</p>

Student Support File:

- The Student Support File will allow the school to track the student's pathway through the Continuum of Support – right from the start of the support process, and onwards, if necessary
- The Student Support File allows the school to document progress and needs over time
- The Student Support File ensures continuity of support for a student, including transition from primary to post-primary school
- The Student Support File may encourage parental collaboration and parental engagement in the student's learning
- The Student Support File assists schools in providing an appropriate level of support to students, in line with their level of need
- The Student Support File keeps together all the information about the support of the student: information gathered, plans and interventions, consultations and reviews

Classroom Support Plan:

The starting point for the Classroom Support process is when a teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s) share concerns regarding a student's learning and/or social development in school. At this point some simple classroom interventions will have already been tried - such as differentiation, adjustments to the learning environment and/or adjustments to teaching style.

Concerns, however, will have remained about:

- student skills and/or behaviour that appear to be falling in below the typical range for his/her age and appear to be impacting on the student's learning and/or socialisation
- the student's response to the simple classroom interventions that have been already tried

These concerns will have suggested that this student has distinct and individual needs that will require a Classroom Support Plan.

- Concerns are recorded, as well as the student's strengths and interests.
- This step in the process may be informed by the data gathered when completing some/all of the Support Checklist.
- Ideas are discussed with regard to strategies/interventions to address the student's needs within the classroom.
- A Support Plan is drawn up and signed by the class teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s) and implemented for an agreed time span.
- The plan is reviewed on an on-going basis.
- The Support Plan, together with reviews, checklists used and other related documents (such as a records of consultation with the NEPS psychologist) will be kept within the Student Support File – a file specifically for that particular student - allowing the school to track the student's progress and needs over time.

School Support Plan:

While most student's initial needs will be met through classroom based interventions, in some cases interventions at Classroom Support level (primary school) are not sufficient to fully meet the student's educational needs. A School Support Plan may be needed.

Steps in developing a School Support Plan:

The decision to initiate a School Support Plan is usually taken as a result of the review of a Classroom Support Plan, by the class teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s), in collaboration with support teacher(s) in the school.

- The concerned teacher(s), parent(s)/guardian(s), and support teacher(s) share and record ongoing concerns regarding the student's progress in school, as well as noting the student's strengths and interests.
- The concerned teacher needs to involve the SEN in the problem-solving process at this point.
- The School Support Plan will be informed by a more systematic gathering of information about the student, which may include diagnostic assessment and observation of the student's learning and/or behavioural/emotional/social skills. This step in the process may be informed by data gathered when completing the Support Checklist.
- The Support Plan is drawn up and signed by the concerned teacher/ support teacher(s) / guidance counsellor/ Year Head and parent(s)/guardian(s) and implemented for an agreed time span.
- The plan is reviewed on an on-going basis.
- The School Support Plan, together with reviews, checklists used and other related documents (such as a record of consultation with the NEPS psychologist), will add to the body of information that is already contained within the Student Support File – a file specifically for that particular student. This allows the school to continue to track the student's progress and needs over time.

School Support Plan Plus:

The School Support Plus (for a few) process will be initiated if, in reviewing the Support Plan, it is agreed that the student is not making adequate progress, despite purposeful efforts.

- This process will generally involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem solving process.
- It is expected that the students who are receiving support at the level of School Support Plus, will be those with greatest need.

- Students needing support at this level will have their needs and interventions detailed and monitored in a School Support Plus Plan.
- A review of work already done at the levels of Classroom Support and School Support and contained within the student's Student Support File, will provide important information for this School Support Plus Plan.

The School Support Plus Plan, together with reports from other professionals, consultation records and other relevant documents, will add to the body of information that is already contained within the Student Support File – allowing the school to continue to track the student's progress and needs over time

Pupil Personal Plan

Pupils with SNA support will also have a Pupil Personal Plan. This will be put together by the SEN teacher in consultation with the SEN co-ordinator, class teacher, parents, outside professionals, SENO etc. The PPP will have targets and related actions/strategies which are reviewed twice annually.

As and from October 2015, the school is required to submit a PPP with all applications for SNA support. Personal Pupil Plan (PPP) Section 15 of the Circular 0030/2014 sets out the requirement for the plan "Schools applying for SNA support from the 15/16 school year will be required to submit a Personal Pupil Plan for each pupil outlining the pupil's special care needs and showing how the SNA will be deployed to assist the pupil. The plan should demonstrate how the school intends to actively reduce, and where appropriate, eliminate dependency on SNA support within a reasonable timeframe. The plan should include time-bound targets for the development of independence skills. Only a very small number of pupils with severe special educational needs and very significant care needs will continue to access to SNA support throughout their education" It is envisaged that the PPP will be developed in conjunction with the Student Support File which has been developed by NEPS and schools are encouraged to use the NEPS Continuum of Support framework when planning for care needs of students with special educational needs. During the year it will be necessary to develop such a plan for all pupils with SNA support as they are now required for all care needs reviews in schools.

- **The SEN teacher, class teacher and SEN co-ordinator will ensure that SNAs have access to the PPP for pupils in their care.**
- **Strategies to support the achievement of the targets will be agreed by the group and reviewed/updated at least twice per year or when required.**
- **The Principal and SEN co-ordinator will develop a folder of suitable strategies that SNAs can adapt to achieve the targets in the PPP.**
- **These strategies will be developed and training giving at the monthly SNA meetings conducted by the Principal.**

13. Meeting the needs

We will meet the needs of identified pupils through a number of co-ordinated approaches:

- Use of effective teaching and learning strategies in the classroom
- Identifying the role of the SEN teacher
- Prevention programmes at early intervention ages
- Planning to support social, emotional and behavioural needs as well as learning needs
- Effective target-setting.

Classroom Strategies

Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. 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

- Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level
- All pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued
- Lessons are planned carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom.
- Teaching approaches are adapted for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern.
- Targeted interventions may be required to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs.
- Implementation of 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
- Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies.
- Regularly differentiation of lessons to cater for the diverse variety of needs in the classroom 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
 - scaffolded instruction.

This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

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
 - cooperative teaching
 - early intervention
 - 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.
- 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 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. Useful curricular resources include:

Early intervention and prevention

In view of the substantial international evidence that early-intervention and prevention programmes can lead to improved outcomes for pupils, we will ensure that some teaching resources are used for this purpose. The use of early-intervention and prevention programmes helps mitigate the development of learning, social and emotional difficulties.

- During our annual SEN reviews we will take note of whole-school issues that may be addressed through early-intervention programmes, which are evidence-based and which are responsive to our local context.
- We aim to be flexible and innovative by developing and trialling new approaches
- We will use assessment data to evaluate the efficacy of these interventions.
- SEN teachers will meet regularly to develop and share successful practice and identify which programmes in particular contribute to improvements in the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- We will ensure that some of our SEN time is allocated to additional teaching resources in junior classes to strengthen station teaching approaches which target the promotion of language, literacy and numeracy skills.

Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs

We believe that addressing social, emotional and behavioural needs has a significant role to play in creating a good learning environment for pupils, particularly SEN pupils in our school.

All teachers, mainstream and SEN, will be trained regularly in teaching methodologies and classroom management techniques that create an environment where pupils receive the necessary emotional support and security to learn to their full potential.

All intervention programmes will carefully monitored to assess and record their impact on pupil progress, participation in learning and in school life.

These programmes are most effective and achieve better outcomes when they are implemented as intended by the designers and when implementation is intensive and includes frequent opportunities for pupils to practise skills.

We promote the use of the following as well-validated programmes to address behavioural and emotional needs:

- The Incredible Years – Teacher Classroom Management programme as a means of preventing the emergence of behavioural difficulties;
- FUN FRIENDS and FRIENDS for Life as a means of preventing anxiety and building resilience, or similar evidence-based programmes.
- Studio 3- low arousal approach
- Weaving Wellbeing
- The services of Sligo School Completion Programme will be used to support work on social, emotional and behavioural targets. Mary McHugh works in the school for 1.5 days per week and will take pupils as designated by the SEN team for one-to-one and small group support. MAP, DESTY and a selection of wellbeing and self-

esteem programmes will be used. Mary will make home visits and/or communicate with parents to support this work. SCP also provides afterschool and holiday time support for SEN pupils in consultation with the Principal and SEN co-ordinator, with full parental permission.

- In addition, the Department's support services offer a wide range of programmes and resource materials related to the social, emotional and behavioural needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. These programmes cover such issues as bullying, transition and behaviour management.
 - www.pdst.ie/primary/antibullying Transition from Primary to Post-Primary www.sess.ie/resources/transition-primary-post-primary
 - Challenging Behaviour, Social Skills and Pupils with Special Educational Needs <http://www.sess.ie/challenging-behaviour-and-social-skills-students-special-educational-needs>
<http://www.sess.ie/challenging-behaviour-pathways-prevention>

14. Review and Target-Setting

In JUNE and September each year the SEN co-ordinator and Principal will meet with the SEN team to conduct a review of SEN provision in the school, following the 5 actions listed below:

- **Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs**
- **Action 2: Setting learning targets**
- **Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches**
- **Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes**
- **Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources**

Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs

Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school based data and information from external professionals where available. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using both formal and informal assessment approaches (e.g. standardised tests, diagnostic tests, information on social and emotional competence etc.). Identify all the pupils at each levels of the Continuum of Support.

Classroom Support

Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Focus of Supports: <i>Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills</i>	Type of Support: <i>Classroom support, small group or individual, school yard</i>

School Support

Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Focus of Supports: <i>Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills</i>	Type of Support: <i>Classroom support, small group or individual, school yard</i>

Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Focus of Supports: <i>Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life- skills</i>	Type of Support: <i>Classroom support, small group or individual, school yard</i>

Action 2: Setting learning targets

Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the Continuum of Support. For each child with identified needs, the school generated targets for learning and set these out in a Support Plan. We will use the Support Plan template below.

Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches 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 small-group teaching, and individualised support, where necessary. They should also be mindful of the need for interventions and supports to be evidence-informed.

Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes

Based on identified need, choose evidence-informed early-intervention/prevention programmes to address such needs. Identify time needed and staffing commitment

Examples of early Intervention or prevention programmes:

- Literacy Lift Off
- Teaching Comprehension Skills- Building Bridges
- Ready, Set, Go Maths
- Maths Recovery
- Numicon
- Fun Friends/Friends for Life /Incredible Years
- 6th Class Transition Programme
- Buddy Programme
- First Steps Writing
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Jolly Phonics
- Phonological Awareness Programmes
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy e.g. Maths Home School Links, Homework Policy Guidelines for Parents, Infants meetings
- Differentiation - adapting the learning environment.
- In-class support from the SET team based on identified needs.
- Station teaching /Team teaching in the infant classes with oral language focus.
- Withdrawing individuals/groups.

Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources

- Cross-reference the needs of pupils at the 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 and when and where the teaching will take place.
- Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need, receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.
- Consider co-ordinating activities to ensure the optimal use of teaching resources and the most appropriate time for these activities to take place

Action 6 Tracking recording and reviewing progress

Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their established targets is monitored:

- At whole-school level by all teachers
- At the Classroom Support level of the Continuum by class teachers and whole school approaches
- At the School Support and School Support Plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers

<http://cat.sess.ie/tool>

<https://www.sess.ie/sess-functional-language-and-communication-resource-0>

15. Parental Involvement

St. Brendan's NS greatly values the input of parents in planning for pupils with Special Educational Needs. Parents will be involved at each level of the Continuum of Support process.

- Parents should share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage
- As soon as the teacher identifies a possible educational need, parents will be invited to meet with the class teacher. It is important that parents attend all meetings arranged by the school.
- All parents sign a permission slip for diagnostic and standardised testing on enrolment. However, it will be considered good practice for written permission to be sought and placed in the child's support file. Parents will be informed of the checklists and testing required to inform classroom support strategies.
- Strategies for Class-based intervention will be discussed and recorded in the Student Support File.
- Parental support will also be garnered for work at home to support the child's learning. Parents should support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning.
- Parents will be informed of the progress being made at regular meetings that will include the class teacher, parents and SEN co-ordinator if needed. These date and outcome of these meetings will be recorded in the child's support file. Results of testing will be communicated and interpreted clearly to parents by the class teacher.
- Parents will be invited to attend a review meeting in February and October and will be involved in reviewing progress towards the previous targets and setting new targets. Parents will be consulted when/if the SEN co-ordinator and SET believe that the child is ready to be discharged from the support team.
- St. Brendan's has an open communication policy for parents with regular contact facilitated through text, phone-call, email, website, app messaging, online See-Saw, Class Dojo and Google Classroom for a. In-person contact is facilitated through high staff visibility and availability at arrival and dismissal times.
- Parent-teacher meetings are held once a year. Our annual school report contains a box for SEN teachers comments and suggestions for how parents can support an individual child's learning.

- Staff are encouraged to be open and engaging with parents and provide support to the parent in understanding their child's needs and providing training and advice to parents who need it, in a non-judgemental manner.
- The School Completion Service provides links to parents and the project worker will meet with families in their homes or in the school outside regular school hours if required eg during summer holidays.

16. Standardised testing

St. Brendan's believe that gathering evidence about how well pupils are learning, and using this information to improve the learning opportunities provided for them, are essential elements in ensuring that each pupil makes good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills.

This process of gathering and using assessment data begins at the level of the individual pupil to enable the teacher to adjust instruction to suit the needs of individual learners and to inform them and their parents about the progress that they are making.

Standardised tests are one of a number of assessment tools that can be used to inform teaching and learning in primary schools.

In accordance with Departmental Circulars, available at

www.education.ie/en/SchoolsColleges/Services/Returns/Supporting-Assessment/Standardised-all schools, both mainstream schools and special classes, where appropriate, are required to undertake standardised testing and to submit the results of those tests undertaken independently by individual pupils in second, fourth and sixth classes to the Department of Education and Skills.

In St. Brendan's NS the Micra T and Sigma T tests are administered in May each year. From time to time the Drumcondra tests are administered in Autumn, to provide more precise data at the start of the school year, particularly when disruption to the school year has occurred.

Teachers must adhere to the guidelines provided in the teacher's handbook should be followed in relation to the administration of the standardised test to ensure consistency and validity.

St. Brendan's along with all other schools is required to upload the aggregated results of standardised tests undertaken independently by pupils in second, fourth and sixth classes onto the Esinet portal of the Department of Education (Section 6.4 of Circular 0056/2011)

Exclusions from standardised testing:

http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/ActiveCirculars/cl0056_2011.pdf advises: 'Students may be excluded from standardised testing if, in the view of the school principal, they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of migrant students, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test inappropriate.'

This recognises that it may not be in the best interests of certain pupils to undertake standardised testing. Based on their knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities, principal teachers are in a position to take the decision not to administer standardised tests to individual pupils (i.e. to exempt those pupils from standardised testing). The discretion to exempt a child from standardised testing based on educational grounds lies with the school principal. Exemptions should be considered on a case-by-case basis and be warranted only in exceptional cases.

Exemptions should not be used for the blanket exclusion of any group of pupils, for example, Traveller or migrant pupils.

Pupils who are deemed not to be in a position to undertake standardised testing should be included in the return of the standardised assessment data to the Department of Education and Skills as "exempt".

The following table, provided by the Educational and Research Centre, provides guidance regarding those pupils that may or may not be exempted from standardised testing.

Table 1: Standardised Testing: Exemption/Inclusion Criteria

Type of SEN	Pupils who may be exempted	Pupils who should be included
Functional disability	The pupil has a moderate to severe physical disability such that s/he cannot participate in the testing situation.	The pupil can respond to the test.

Table 1 (cont'd)

Type of SEN	Pupils who may be exempted	Pupils who should be included
Moderate/severe general learning disability, behavioural or emotional disability	The pupil has a moderate or severe general learning disability or a behavioural or emotional disability such that, in the opinion of the school principal or other qualified staff member, s/he cannot participate in the testing situation. This includes pupils who are cognitively, behaviourally, or emotionally unable to follow even the general instructions of the test.	The pupil can respond to the test. S/he should NOT be excluded solely because of poor academic performance or discipline problems.
Insufficient assessment language experience	The pupil meets ALL of the following three criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not a native speaker in English; • Has limited proficiency in English; and • Has received less than one year of instruction in English. 	The pupil meets fewer than three of the criteria.
Pupil with a specific learning disability (e.g., severe dyslexic difficulties)	The pupil is considered in the professional opinion of the school principal or other qualified staff member to have severe dyslexic difficulties or has been identified as having such difficulties following an appropriate psychological assessment.	The pupil has mild reading/dyslexic difficulties.

Good assessment practice involves the following at school level:

- The maintenance of a school register for standardised testing
- Recording clearly in this register from year-to-year, pupils that have been exempted from standardised testing and the reasons why
- Standardised tests, if used before the end of first class, should be administered in small groups only. The administration of standardised tests to whole classes is inappropriate at infant class level.
- Provision of a whole-school policy that provides for school-based testing in order to identify and monitor the progress of pupils with special education needs.

- Pupils with moderate learning disabilities should have their literacy and numeracy attainments monitored at least once, if not twice per year, using appropriate testing materials suited to their levels of ability. The results of these tests will not be forwarded to the Department but will be used to inform teachers' practice and planning.

Finally, some pupils with a learning or physical disability may well be in a position to complete standardised testing. While the mode of **implementation** is clearly set out in test instructions, some reasonable accommodations may be made at school level to facilitate individual pupils in completing a test, if it is deemed by the Principal that this is in the best interest of the child. These may include:

- Providing reading assistance in the case of a standardised test of Mathematics 3
- Undertaking the test in a quiet environment outside the classroom
- Using a stop watch or a timer on a mobile phone to give movement breaks during the test.

Results arising from modified testing arrangements should not be submitted to the Department. The pupils in question should be considered exempted. Only test results based on strict adherence to the relevant test administration manual should be submitted to the Department.

The SIGMA-T Manual notes that the Sigma-T is not suitable for children with problems in colour recognition.

17. Other Roles and Responsibilities

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all of the school community: The Board of Management; Principal Teacher; Class Teachers; Support Teachers; SNAs; Parents; Pupils and External Bodies & Agencies.

Board of Management

The Board of Management oversees the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy. They also ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation, effective teaching resources and secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SEN are provided.

Principal Teacher

As outlined in the DES circular 0013/17, the Principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states the Principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

The school Principal is required to

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on special needs in co-operation with the support teachers.
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning-support and special needs.
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN and special needs on an on-going basis.
- In tandem with the SEN coordinator, monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that pupils with the greatest need receive the greatest supports.
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils' needs and provide them with appropriate supports.
- Liaise regularly with the SEN co-ordinator and support teachers
- Arrange classroom accommodation for support teachers.
- Arrange for the provision of SEN funding and resources.
- Organise and co-ordinate the construction of support plans. Ensure that individualised planning takes place.
- • Ensure that pupils who have been allocated SEN provision receive it.
- Organise the funding and provision of appropriate assessment tests.

- Complete application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE, NEPS, CAMHS, etc.
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services.
Liaise with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs.
- Co-ordinate and organise SNAs' work and timetabling.
- 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.
- 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.

18. Other related school policies:

- Exceptional Ability/Giftedness
- Irish Exemption Policy
- SNA Policy
- Child Protection Policy

19. Ratification and Communication

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Oct 2022.

This policy will be reviewed in two years' time or in the event of a change to the SEN allocation model by the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed:

Noel Rooney
Fr. Noel Rooney, Chairperson BOM

Marie Hurley
Marie Hurley, Principal/Secretary to BOM

Date: 13/10/2022