



## **Caherline National School SEN Policy**

**School Year 2020/2021**

CAHERLINE NATIONAL SCHOOL, CAHERLINE, CAHERCONLISH, CO. LIMERICK,  
ROLL NO. 15226K

## **School Information and Belief Statement**

Caherline N.S. is a Catholic co-educational primary school with two ASD classrooms and SEN pupils in mainstream classrooms throughout the various class levels. The school has a Catholic ethos and we commit ourselves to making our school a safe and enjoyable place of education through an integrated and challenging curriculum. Each pupil will be respected and encouraged to develop to his/her personal potential. We encourage a collaborative approach when it comes to SEN, incorporating effective co-operation between pupils, staff, parents, management and the relevant outside agencies.

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 integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each individual child and by either modifying the environment, activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

## **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).

## **Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- identify additional needs that our pupils may have
- allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs
- divide the roles and responsibilities among our school community in relation to pupils with additional needs
- track, monitor, review and report on the progress of children with additional needs
- communicate information between the SEN team, principal, staff and parents/guardians

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Board of Management:***

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided to accommodate our 2 ASD classrooms and other SEN pupils in the school.

### ***Principal and SEN Co-ordinator:***

The *Learning Support Guidelines (2000, P.39)* outlined the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The SEN co-ordinator (Deputy Principal) supports the principal in this. The new allocation model states the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following;

- Implement and monitor the school's Additional Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- 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
- assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher (Deputy Principal- SEN Co-ordinator)
- communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser)
- oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme
- allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents
- inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress

### ***SEN Team and SEN Co-ordinator:***

SEN Team and co-ordinator **in collaboration with class teachers** should:

- communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis
- liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs
- liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SEN team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS)
- co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs
- collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support

- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level
- co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests
- select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted
- oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected Aladdin software to monitor the progress of pupils
- maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support

***Class Teacher:***

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for additional support. They should

- implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- create a positive learning environment within the classroom
- differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class
- administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines
- discuss outcomes of standardised testing with SEN team to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support
- open a Student Support File(SSF) once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support
- develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of Classroom Support before school support is implemented
- collaborate with staff to develop Student Support File(SSF) for each pupil in receipt of School Support or school support plus
- meet with Special Education Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an Individual Education Plan
- regularly meet with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff to review SSFs
- meet regularly with Special Education Teachers, relevant staff and parents to review SSF
- where applicable, collaborate with the SEN team regarding teaching aims and activities for team teaching
- adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of supplementary teaching will not be absent for the same subject/activity during each session
- co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with SEN within the class(es) to which they are assigned

- liaise with and seek advice from the SEN

### ***Special Education Teacher (SET)***

The SEN teacher should:

- familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need
- assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention
- collaboratively develop Student Support Files for each pupil selected for school support teaching with class teachers and other staff
- meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an SSF
- collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff to develop an SSF for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus
- regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review SSFs
- meet at the beginning of the school year with class teachers, relevant staff and parents to review SSFs.
- update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of school support
- provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis
- support whole-school procedures for screening
- administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes
- meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress
- co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload
- discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings
- provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received

### ***Special Needs Assistants:***

The duties of the SNA carried out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills and under the direction of the principal/class teachers, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned. (Circular 10/76).

The SNA should

- support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- contribute to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils
- support learning and teaching in the classroom
- attend, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM

- attend termly SSF meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary
- ensure the safety of the SEN pupils in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty
- in the case of ASD classroom SNAs, an SNA will accompany the student to integration in the mainstream classroom where necessary

### ***Parents/Guardians:***

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parents/Guardians through their unique knowledge of their own children have much to contribute to their child's learning.

Parent/Guardian 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**. If information of this manner is withheld, this can impede the ability of the school to provide early intervention and prepare for the child's needs
- support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning
- attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SEN team
- support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities
- inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage

### ***Pupils:***

Pupils who are in receipt of supplementary teaching should, as appropriate:

- be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets
- become familiar with the targets that have been set for them
- develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning
- contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment

## **Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs**

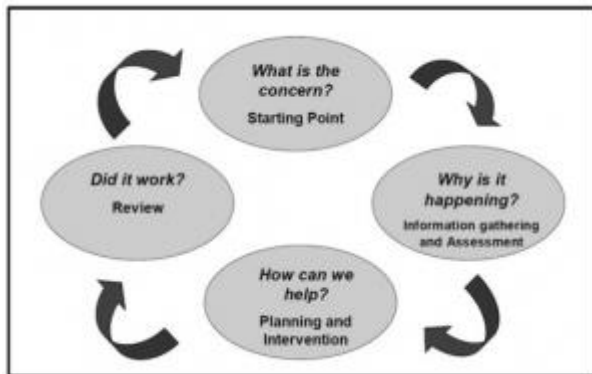
### **Continuum of Support**

We use the Continuum of Support Framework set out by the Department of Education to identify and support children with additional needs. Like this framework, we recognise that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long-term and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged

approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

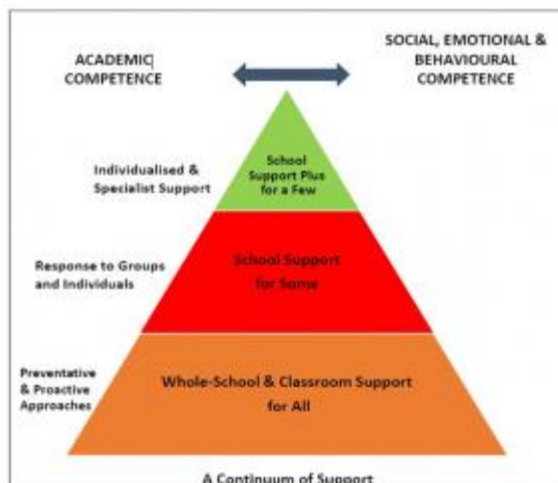
The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, - sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

**The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:**



**STAGE 1 CLASSROOM SUPPORT**

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are **additional to or different** from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. Classroom

Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.

### **STAGE 2 SCHOOL SUPPORT**

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SEN Team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan.

### **STAGE 3 SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS**

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan.

We gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs by using stages explained here

[https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_special_needs_guidelines.pdf)

*\*\*\*while most pupils' initial needs should be met through classroom based interventions, a small number of pupils may arrive at school with difficulties that are more significant or which are immediately recognised. In such cases, it may be more appropriate to begin with a School Support or School Support Plus Plan. Most of the pupils to whom this applies will be new to the school. However it may also apply for some pupils following an event which impacts significantly on them in school.\*\*\**

### **Information Gathering and Assessment**

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening; including standardised testing, is carried out in all classes annually and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans.

### **Assessment and Screening Tests:**

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Observation, Checklists, Baseline, Teacher designed assessments
- Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, Teacher designed assessments
- 1st class-6<sup>th</sup> Class: Observation, Teacher designed assessments Checklists, Sigma T., Micra

T



As a school, we also carry out a range of other assessments when necessary including but not limited to assessment checklists in teacher manuals of our chosen curricular books, for example Busy at Maths termly assessments etc.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date of this policy.

### **Inventory of Test Materials in the School Screening and Diagnostic Tests**

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Sigma-T
- Micra- T
- Woodcock Johnson
- MALT
- Baseline

### **Prevention and Early Intervention Strategies**

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical 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.
- Close collaboration and consultation between the Infant Teacher and the SET team.
- Promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Time, Reading opportunities when finished class work
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g. Ready Set Go Maths, Hands-on approach
- Differentiation – adapting the learning environment.
- In-class support from the SET
- Maths stations
- Withdrawing individuals/groups.

### **Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources**

Once pupils needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

At the end of each term the SET team meet class teachers and SNAs and review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term.

We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

## **SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT**

### **Level of priority is given as follows when necessary**

1. Children with identified complex needs by an external professional such as a
  - Physical Disability
  - Hearing Impairment
  - Visual Impairment
  - Emotional Disturbance
  - Moderate General Learning Disability
  - Severe/Profound General Learning Disability
  - Autistic Spectrum Disorder
  - Assessed Syndrome
  - Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment
  
2.
  - Children on or under the 12th Percentile in Literacy/Maths Standardised Tests
  - Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below the 12th percentile in Literacy/Numeracy such as
    - Borderline Mild General Learning Disability
    - Mild General Learning Disability
    - Specific Learning Disability
    - Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

- Children in junior infants for whom English is an additional language or children whom English is an additional language newly arrived in Ireland in all other class levels
- Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at a classroom level

### **Timetabling**

When drawing up timetables it is important to remember that:

- All staff need to be as flexible as possible
- timetables should be continually reviewed
- children should not miss the same subject each time they are withdrawn
- if a pupil is unavailable for their supplementary session due to special circumstances, the Special Education Teacher will attempt to reschedule the session with the co-operation of another teacher.
- interruptions to classes/classrooms/SEN timetable should be kept to a minimum.

### **Tracking, recording and reviewing progress**

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process.

### **Student Support File**

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File is based on the NEPS template and is stored on the school server. All support files should include:

- Cover sheet with pupil's details
- A timeline of actions
- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
- Support plans (See below)
- Checklists

A class teacher or SET should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 – Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored class teacher's assessment folder and pupil records filing cabinet stored GP hall.

## **Support Plans**

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support.

### ***Stage 1 – Classroom Support***

A Support Plan at stage 1 is a simple plan which is drawn up by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SET which outlines the pupil's additional educational needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home-based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their child's development. The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school term, after one month, whatever time is deemed appropriate for each particular case.

### ***Stage 2 – School Support***

A Support Plan at stage 2 is a plan drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil's response to the actions taken.

### ***Stage 3 – School Support Plus***

A Support Plan at stage 3 is a plan drawn up by the class teacher and appointed Special Education Teacher, in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out;

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil
- The special educational needs of the pupil
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from including:
  - Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting
  - Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
  - Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
  - Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports, if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
- Support required from a Special Needs Assistant (SNA), if appropriate
- The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months
- The pupil's priority learning needs, long and short term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

## **SEN Records**

### ***Individual SEN Files***

All pupils' SEN files are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the GP hall. Each class teacher should make themselves familiar with files of SEN students in their class at the beginning of the school year. It is the responsibility of SETs to update and manage the files of the children on school support and school support plus that they support. It is the responsibility of the class teachers to make the SET team aware of any new files, assessments or reports sent in regarding pupils in their class and to put these in to the students files upon receiving and reading them. The following should be stored

- Student Support File
- Psychological Report
- Copy of referrals made to outside agencies
- Copy of reports from outside agencies
- Record of SEN meetings with parents, outside agencies and inter- school meetings
- Record of SEN correspondence between parents, outside agencies and school staff
- Any other documentation deemed relevant regarding the pupils needs

### ***Communication between SET Team/Principal/Class Teachers***

At the beginning of each term meetings between class teachers and SETs will take place. The SET teachers will meet the class teachers of pupils they are assigned to and discuss timetabling, needs of the pupils, and all relevant information will be communicated. The regular SEN timetable will not be followed during these weeks. This flexibility ensures adequate cover for class teachers and also facilitates SET team planning meetings.

### **Health and Safety Issues**

Every staff member and pupil is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled are in place as soon as possible. Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans will be drawn up and implemented.

### **Supervision/Child Protection**

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both themselves and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SEN teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

**Implementation and Review**

This policy will be implemented from Term 1 2020.