

S. N. Foghlaim Le Chéile Átha Fhirdhia

Ardee Educate Together N. S.

Bóthar Dún Dealgan

Dundalk Road

Átha Fhirdhia

Ardee

Contae Lú

Co Louth

A92 TW80



Telephone: (041) 6853774

Email: ardeeetns@gmail.com

Web Site: www.aet.ie

Roll No: 20171P

ARDEE EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

POLICY ON LEARNING SUPPORT / RESOURCE TEACHING

In Ardee Educate Together National School the principal aim of learning support / resource teaching is to optimise the learning process in order to enable pupils with learning needs to achieve the highest possible levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy. We will endeavour to:

- Enable these pupils to participate in the full curriculum at their class level.
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- Enable these pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- Involve parents in supporting their children.
- Collaborate with colleagues in order to maximise learning.
- Establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning.

The Staged Approach to Assessment, Identification and Programme Planning as recommended by the Department of Education.

Stage 1

A class teacher or a parent may have concerns about the academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development of a pupil. The class teacher then administers screening measures such as checklists or teacher designed tests to meet the child's needs. The class teacher draws up a plan for help to be administered in the normal class setting. This plan can be reviewed regularly, with appropriate parental involvement. If concern remains after a number of reviews and adaptations the learning support / resource teacher will be consulted. If supplementary teaching is deemed necessary it may be provided for a period of time for example 6-8 weeks or one term, depending on the child's needs and progress.

Stage 2

If further intervention is deemed necessary and the pupil is referred to the learning support teacher for further diagnostic testing, the parents of the child will be contacted. If this diagnostic testing suggests that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this will be arranged. The class teacher, learning support teacher and parents then draw up a learning programme, which should include appropriate interventions for implementation in the home, in the classroom and during supplementary teaching. The pupil's progress is reviewed regularly, in consultation with the parents. If significant concern remains after a number of reviews it may be necessary to involve outside agencies such as NEPS or the services of the Health Services Executive (HSE).

Stage 3

The school may formally request a consultation and an assessment of need from outside the school in respect of pupils who fail to make progress after supplementary teaching. Such specialist advice is sought from psychologists, speech therapists, audiologists and occupational therapists etc. This consultation is carried out with the permission of the child's parents/guardians. Following the consultation the learning support/resource teacher, the class teacher, the parents and the specialist (if available) will draw up an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This is a planning process which encourages and promotes planning and assessment for an individual child. An IEP may include not only goals relating to academic or cognitive development but also those relating to motor skills, social skills, self-help skills or emotional development. This IEP will identify any additional resources that are considered necessary to implement the plan. This plan is reviewed regularly.

A (GEP) Group Education Plan may be used for a small group of pupils with similar needs and common targets.

Guidelines

The following procedures are being implemented as a means of responding effectively to pupils' individual learning needs.

Preventative Strategies

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties, the following strategies are being implemented:-

- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in the provision of additional individualised support.
- Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants.
- The provision of the "Tips for Parents" booklet.
- The arrangement of formal and informal Parent / Teacher Meetings.
- Ongoing, Teacher observation and assessment.

Early Intervention Programme

- Early intervention begins for pupils in Junior Infants in response to the class teacher's observations using Early Risk Indicators checklists. All class teachers will follow the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- Any pupil thought to be at risk in Junior Infants is screened using the Belfield Infant Assessment Test.
- All Senior Infants are screened using MIST either after completion of five terms in school or when all pupils in the class have reached the age of 5 years & 8 months.
- At the end of Senior Infants pupils are tested using the Drumcondra Early Literacy & Drumcondra Early Numeracy Tests.
- The Principal and / or Learning Support/Resource Teacher decides on the size of the groups for Learning Support / Resource Teaching taking into account the individual learning needs of pupils and the overall special education demands in the school.
- Lessons focus on the development of individual reading, word identification strategies, phonemic awareness, oral work, comprehension skills writing.

Selection of Pupils for Supplementary Teaching

- Pupils from 1st -> 6th classes are tested at the end of each year using Micra-T tests for English and Sigma-T tests for Maths.
- Priority for special education teaching is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 12th percentile on standardised tests.
- Special consideration is given to Junior / Senior Infants identified by HSE, Early Intervention Team (preschool) as needing extra support.
- We also consider those whose attainments in standardised tests do not correlate with their IQ scores (NRIT).
- In the case of each pupil a consultative meeting between the class teacher, parents and / or the Learning Support/Resource Teacher concerning the pupil's performance is arranged.
- We seek parental agreement is sought for the conducting of diagnostic assessment and inclusion in Learning Support Class.
- Such tests are administered by the Class Teacher / Learning Support/Resource Teacher. A further consultative meeting may take place to consider the outcomes of the assessment.

Provision of Supplementary Teaching

- The Learning Support/Resource Teacher devises a programme of work in consultation with the class teacher.
- Such plans address the pupils' full range of needs and include:
 - Details from the pupils' class teachers.
 - Assessment results
 - Other relevant information e.g. reports from other agencies
 - Learning strengths and attainments
 - Priority learning needs
 - Learning targets
 - Class based learning activities - where applicable.
 - Supplementary support activities
 - Home support activities.
- Each child's progress is monitored through teacher observation, the keeping of planning and progress records and through children's own work - folders and reading records.
- A review takes place at various intervals throughout the school year. This is based on standardised tests. The Learning Support/Resource Teacher or the class teacher meets the parents to discuss their child's progress in the light of the review.
- Individual Pupil Files contain:-
 - Individual profile and learning programme.
 - Copies of NRIT and standardised tests results.
 - Other records of relevance.

A system of withdrawal and/or in class support operates in response to the needs of the individual pupil.

Procedures for Continuing / Discontinuing Pupils

- Following each review a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of supplementary teaching.
- The criteria on which this decision is based include:
 - Has the pupil achieved some / all of the learning targets set?
 - Will the pupil be able to cope independently / semi independently in the classroom learning context?

The decision making process involves consultation among the class teacher, the Learning Support/Resource Teacher and the pupil's parents and account is also taken of the overall special educational demands in the school.

Exceptionally able or Gifted Pupils

Pupils who have been assessed as exceptionally able or gifted pupils will have a differentiated learning programme to challenge their ability.

They will receive extra support for exceptionally able or gifted pupils from the Class Teacher and/or the Learning Support Teacher (depending on Learning Support demands in the school).

Monitoring Progress:

Monitoring the academic progress of the pupils in this school will be accomplished by:

- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, literacy and
- numeracy skills of the pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties by the class teacher.
- Formal and informal testing and observation of work by the class teacher.
- Screening and selection of pupils for supplementary teaching in English and / or in Mathematics by administering and scoring appropriate measures:
 - Junior Infants (at risk) - B.I.A.P. Test
 - Senior Infants - M.I.S.T. Test
 - 1st to 6th Class-Micra T (English) & Sigma T (Maths)
- Standardised and diagnostic testing by the Class Teacher and/or Learning Support Teacher.
- Non-academic progress of pupils in the school will be reviewed informally, for example under the headings of improvements in the pupil's self-esteem; school attendance; attitude to learning; attitude to school and general behaviour.

Record Keeping

- Tracking of pupils progress from class to class will apply for English, Maths and N.R.I.T. test results.
- Pupil's records, test results and assessments are kept in a secure location e.g. filing cabinet with lock.

Parent Involvement

- Regular communication takes place between the Learning Support/Resource Teacher and parents.
- Specific work may be given to parents to assist them to work effectively with their child.
- This support work is available from the Learning Support/Resource Teacher and/or Class Teacher.
- The parents and Learning Support/Resource Teacher meet formally and informally throughout the year to review the child's progress and provide support and advice on how best to help the child at home.

Referral to Out of School Agencies

- We follow the Continuum of Support Guidelines.
- The Principal and Learning Support/Resource Teacher discuss all relevant cases with the school NEPS psychologist, early in each school year. All test results are reviewed. Pupils are short listed for possible assessment based on this sharing of information.
- The Principal, Class teacher and Learning Support/Resource Teacher co-ordinate the referral of pupils to outside agencies e.g. Education Psychologist.
- The Principal and /or Learning Support/Resource Teacher and / or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral.

- The class teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- The external professional, most likely NEPS Psychologist visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, Principal, class teacher and Learning Support/Resource Teacher (as appropriate) and the assessment is conducted.
- This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.

Success Criteria

The school-wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupil learning in the following ways:-

- Improved standards of academic achievement within the pupil's individual learning programme.
- Enabling of the discontinuation of the provision of special education teaching based on positive assessment results.
- Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs;
- Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupils' progress.
- The achievement of these success criteria will be assessed through feedback from teachers, pupils and parents.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Board of Management** has overall responsibility for developing and supporting school policy on learning support and special needs.

The **Principal Teacher** has overall responsibility for the school's learning support education programme and for the operation of services for children with additional learning needs. The Principal regularly communicates with outside services for example National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) & the Special Education Needs Organiser (S.E.N.O.) and other specialists in order to arrange services for children in need and to monitor their progress.

The **Class Teacher** has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class including those selected for supplementary teaching. She / he should endeavour to create a positive and supportive learning environment. This is best achieved by grouping pupils for instruction, differentiating the curriculum for pupils who are experiencing difficulty and liaising closely with their parents and learning support teacher. It is essential that the class teacher should contribute to the development of the learning targets in the IEP/GEP and to the planning and implementation of activities designed to attain these targets.

The **Learning Support / Resource Teacher** implements a broad range of strategies designed to enhance learning:

- In consultation with class teachers and parents, develop an IEP/GEP for pupils who are selected for supplementary teaching.
- Keep plans, reading records & work samples for pupils or groups who receive learning support/resource lessons.
- Deliver supplementary teaching to selected pupils from Junior Infants to 6th class who experience low achievement and/or learning difficulties.
- Co-ordinate the implementation of whole school policy for the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching.

- Keeps a list of all pupils attending supplementary teaching.
- Meet parents of pupils selected for supplementary teaching.
- Store psychological assessment reports, tests, IEPs/GEPs.
- Contribute to decision-making in relation to the purchase of learning resources, books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the learning support teachers' room.
- Liaise with the special education department in post primary schools and transfer records and test results directly to them.

Parents / Guardian(s): The learning support / resource teacher and the class teacher will work with the parent(s)/ guardian(s) to help support the child in the best way possible. The parent (s) / guardian (s) will be involved with the drawing up of the IEP for their child and in carrying out the tasks they agree to do as part of the IEP.

Teachers will communicate with the parent(s) / guardian (s) regularly.

- Parents who do not wish to have their child / ren attend Learning support will be asked to sign a letter stating this fact.

Role of Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistant form part of the learning support team, along with the learning support and resource teacher. Their role is to:

- Foster the participation of pupils with special needs in the social and academic process of the school and to enable pupils to become independent learners.
- To work as part of the learning support team and the wider school community to promote an inclusive curriculum and environment for children with special needs.
- Be available to work with other children in the school with special needs, learning needs, behaviour needs, social & emotional needs apart from any child they have been assigned to. (Note: SNAs are not child specific).
- Work closely with the class teacher to develop a plan as how best to support an individual child's needs, for example, physical disability, attention deficit, behaviour problems etc.
- Support pupils with special needs in the classroom.
- Take part in Station Teaching under the supervision and guidance of a teacher.
- Carry out the work assigned to them by the Class Teacher.
- Carry out the work assigned to them by the Principal Teacher.
- SNA's may need to move from child to child during the day or from room to room depending on lesson or class arrangements for pupils.

Provision of Resources

- The school is very well equipped with resources for the provision of special education teaching which include a variety of graded reading programmes, textbooks, library books, ancillary materials, oral language programmes, educational games, phonic programmes etc.
- Special Education resources will primarily be used in the Special Education room(s). These resources may be made available to class teachers following consultation with the Learning Support/Resource Teacher.

ICT Provision

The Learning support rooms have access to:-

- Computers with software for Learning Support/Resource.
- Internet access.
- Interactive whiteboard.

Timetabling

- The provision of Learning Support/Resource Teacher is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and/or Maths.
- Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they attend special education. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by class teachers while class disruption is minimised. The provision of special education operates on a withdrawal system from the classroom and / or in class support.

This policy was officially adopted by the Board of Management.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson, BOM