

Special Educational Needs Policy 2019

Rahara National School, Athleague Road, Rahara, Co. Roscommon Principal: Mr. John Burke Email: raharans@gmail.com

Web: www.rahara.com



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy

INTRODUCTION

Rahara National School is co-educational primary school under the patronage of the diocese of Elphin. It is an 'ordinary' mainstream primary school, catering for a full cross section of children.

This policy was devised by the teaching staff of our school and ratified by the Board of Management. The policy is under constant review to take into account changes in legislation and curriculum develop e.g. further developments in Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy and so on.

RATIONALE

The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998 and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN ACT)

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

Rahara N.S hopes to serve all the children in our community without prejudice. We welcome all children and seek to provide an appropriate education in line with their individual learning needs. Their presence in our school will enrich our whole school community.

AIMS

Through the implementation of this policy, we strive to

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum to the best of their ability level
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- To enable pupils with special educational needs, also referred to as additional needs, to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as is possible
- To set out procedures for the enrolment of children with additional needs in the school.

- To outline our whole school approach to teaching/ learning in relation to pupils with additional needs
- To outline procedures and practises to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with additional needs.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of all partners in the education of pupils with additional needs.

INCLUSION

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) states that

"A child with SEN shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the degree or nature of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child."

Rahara N.S is an inclusive environment which embraces and celebrates the uniqueness of every pupil. Rahara N.S strives to nurture and cater for the needs of all pupils within the school. Pupils identified with additional needs participate in learning in the regular mainstream classes. They receive instruction in all areas of the Revised Primary School Curriculum and receive additional support where necessary. Rahara N.S endeavours to cater for the individual learning needs of children with additional needs in the mainstream classroom. This enables meaningful participation in learning for all in an inclusive environment.

ENROLMENT

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school's current Enrolment Policy. However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

- In relation to the enrolment of children with special needs, the Board of Management of Rahara N.S. may request a copy of the child's medical and/or psychological report.
- If this is not available, the Board will request that the child be assessed immediately. This report is requested to assist the school in establishing the educational and training needs of the child relevant to his/her disability or special education needs and to profile the support services required.
- Following the receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school could meet the needs specified in the report.
- The school will meet with the parents of the child to discuss the child's needs and the school's suitability or capability in meeting those needs. If necessary, a full case conference involving all parties may be held.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

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

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
- Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum
- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of subjects through collaborative policy making and curriculum planning

- Promotion of parental understanding and 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, and provision of regular school newsletter.
- Class based early intervention by the Learning Support Teacher resulting in the provision of additional individualised support.
- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher

THE IMPORTANT ROLE CLASSROOM TEACHER:

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class(es), including those selected for supplementary teaching. A particular responsibility of the class teacher is to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated. This is best achieved by grouping pupils for instruction, providing pupils with strategies for reading and problem solving, adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils and higher achieving pupil, and liaising closely with their parents. Where a pupil is selected to receive supplementary teaching, it is essential that the class teacher should contribute to developing the learning targets in the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme and to the planning and implementation of activities designed to attain those targets. Where supplementary teaching cannot be provided for a pupil, or is being phased out or discontinued, the class teacher will need to develop and implement a support programme that meets the pupil's changing needs, in consultation with the learning support teacher.

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Pupils with additional needs require an environment which is well organised and predictable and a programme which is presented clearly and with abundant opportunities for success. Pupils with additional needs will participate and be facilitated to access all areas of the curriculum. Realistic learning goals and expectations will be adopted in relation to the pupil's overall progress. Adaptations to the curriculum, outcomes, activities, and resource materials will be made through the use of differentiation. The teacher will vary the use of strategies to meet the learning needs of the pupils. Where the pupil is unable to participate in the class curriculum, an individual programme of work will be designed for the pupil in consultation with the SEN teacher. There will be a balance between the provision for the pupil's academic and social needs. ICT may be used to further facilitate the pupil's learning. Certain pupils may have a recommendation for an exemption from Irish; however, parents must request this exemption and give their consent in writing to the principal. Homework is allocated by the class teacher in consultation with the parents appropriate to the child's ability.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS TEAM

The SEN team consists of the Principal, Assistant Principal, the SEN teacher which can be either a learning support or resource teacher and the class teacher.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM MEETINGS

The SEN team meets with individual mainstream teachers at the end of each instructional term to discuss the progress of children currently receiving learning support from the SEN team and to prepare new Individual Pupil Learning Programmes (IPLP). They also discuss other children in their classes who they feel are at risk and may benefit from extra support. In relation to children in receipt of resource teaching the SEN team meet with the parents,

teachers and other support professionals twice a year to review progress and devise a new Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The principal is responsible for co-ordinating Special Needs Education and will arrange the dates for these meetings. All reviews details and new outcomes are recorded with reference to guidance provided in the NEP resource pack for teachers.

IEPs and IPLPs are reviewed and updated following these meetings. Parent-Teacher meetings are held in the first term (November/December) of each school year. Parents are invited at this time to meet with the SEN teacher. Additional meetings are arranged to facilitate parents wishing to discuss their children's progress, at any time during the year

THE STAGED APPROACH

The SEN team with the principal, assigned responsibility for the co-ordination of Special Needs in the school, and relevant teachers adopt a staged approach to intervention (see model of Staged Approached on following page). If concern remains after intervention and additional support from the teacher and SEN team, the school may request a consultation and assessment of the pupil's need from a specialist outside the school. Where this is the case, the parents' permission in writing will be sought to do so. If the parents refuse to give their permission for a pupil to receive extra support, a written record of their decision, signed by parents will be kept in the child's file. Should parents refuse to give their consent to have a pupil assessed the Board of Management may apply to the Circuit Court for an order to have the pupil assessed.

Observation	ss	Personnel Involved
Stage 1 Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development	Class teacher informs one of the teachers on the Special Needs team and in consultation with this teacher administers appropriate screening measures. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil's identified needs within the normal classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents and termly with the Special Needs team.	Class teacher Parent Special Needs team Additional Supports Available Principal NEPS Psychologist

Stage 2 Child is referred to learning support teacher, with parental permission for further assessment.	If assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's learning plan.	Class teacher Parent Special Needs team Iditional Supports Available Health Board NEPS Psychologist Other Support Staff and Services available to school
If significant concern Stage 3	s remain after a number of reviews,	it may be necessary to implement
Stage 3 School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.	A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary. Any private practitioner engaged by Rahara N.S at Stage 3 will have the relevant Department of Education and Science Circulars and guidance notes drawn to their	Class teacher Parent Special Needs team Relevant Specialist Additional Supports Available • NEPS Psychologist • Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments • Speech and Language Therapist • Occupational Therapist • Psychiatrist • Paediatrician • Art Therapist etc.

LEARNING SUPPORT

Principal Aim of Learning Support

The principal aim of Learning Support is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with additional needs to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

Guiding principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- Effective whole-school policies
- Whole school involvement
- Prevention of failure at infant level
- Provision of intensive early intervention
- Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

Specific Objectives of Learning Support

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability
- Involve parents in supporting their children's learning
- Promote collaboration among teachers

Provision of Learning Support

The following criteria will be used to prioritise pupils for learning support/supplementary teaching:

- Priority is given to pupils scoring at or below the 12th percentile in literacy and numeracy on standardised tests.
- Where there are few children scoring below the 12th percentile in literacy or numeracy standardised tests, support may be offered to children scoring above the 12th percentile who are observed by the teacher as experiencing difficulties in class. These will be discussed and decided upon by members of the SEN team in consultation with the class teacher.
- Pupils diagnosed as having a disability by an outside professional agency e.g. Specific Learning Difficulty, Mild General Learning Disability or Speech and Language delay/disorder but do not meet the criteria to allow the school obtain Resource hours for their benefit will be able to avail of learning support provision.
- Pupils who have been identified as being exceptionally able by the Class Teacher will be introduced to the Staged Approach and may be considered for learning support for exceptionally able.
- Children with Behavioural/Emotional difficulties who in the opinion of the Whole School Staff, need intervention will be offered support if, after Stage 1, sufficient progress has not been made.
- Early Intervention in Literacy and Numeracy.

Nature of Learning Support

- The primary work of the Learning Support Teachers is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils who fall under the umbrella of the criteria already set out
- The school year will be divided into three instructional terms of approximately 10 weeks each.
- A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil
- One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective
- Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency
- The Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher will meet to devise an Individual Pupil Learning Programme (IPLP) or Group Education Plan (GEP), in consultation with the Principal and parents. The pupil involved may also contribute to setting their own short-term targets
- The Learning Support Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:
 - 1. Individual Profile and Learning programmes
 - 2. Long and Short term planning
 - 3. Daily progress reports
 - 4. Assessment records (refer to Assessment Policy)

Learning Support Teaching may be conducted either in or out of the classroom. In situations where it is deemed suitable and of benefit, the support teacher may work in the classroom. This may take the form of Co- Teaching such as Team Teaching, Station Teaching and so on. In some cases, the SEN teacher may teach the class allowing the class teacher to support the child/ children with additional needs.

Individual Pupil Learning Programme / Group Education Plan

The Individual Pupil Learning Programme/ Group Education Plan will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000. The plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- Details from the Class Teacher
- Assessment Results
- Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- Learning strengths and attainments
- Priority Learning Needs
- Learning Targets
- Class based Learning Activities
- Supplementary support activities to include ICT
- Home Support Activities.

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation; the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

A detailed review will take place at the end of each Instructional Term. The SEN team will meet the Class Teacher to discuss the child's progress in the light of the review and notify the parents of any changes.

Timetabling

- The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in Literacy and Numeracy.
- A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher to minimise class disruption.
- The provision of Learning Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
- In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- Following the end of Instructional Term review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching.
- The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher and other members of the SEN team and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
- The criteria on which the decision will be made include:
- 1. A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
- 2. A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context
- 3. A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP.

Referral to out of school agencies

- Children may be referred to outside agencies after class and SEN intervention (Stages 1 and 2 of Staged approach) have failed to address the pupils' needs.
- The SEN teacher, principal and class teacher will meet with the parents to discuss the need for referral and to seek their consent
- The Class teacher and SEN teacher will complete the necessary referral forms in consultation with the Principal and parents. The SEN teacher and Principal coordinate the referral of pupils to outside agencies e.g. NEPS Educational Psychologist, A, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy to name a few.
- Access to outside agencies will be dependent on resources made available by the DES and/or HSE. The relevant support professional may visit and/or liaise with the school.
- The principal will oversee the referral process in the case of a psychological assessment. The principal contacts the NEPS psychologist and a meeting is arranged.
- The pupil(s) selected for assessment are discussed at this meeting. The psychologist timetables the pupil for assessment.
- When the assessment is completed the parents, principal and teacher are informed of the results.
- If the child has a special need under the low incidence category, the principal will contact the SENO in order to apply for resource teaching.

• In the case of a referral for a speech and language or occupational assessment, the SEN teacher who takes the child for additional support, in consultation with the principal, will obtain permission from the parents and refer the child to the appropriate service in writing.

RESOURCE TEACHING:

Pupils who have been assessed by an outside professional agency and who have been diagnosed with a recognised low incidence disability may qualify for resource hours. Once the school receives a report recommending support for the child, parents' permission is sought to make an application

to the SENO. The school may be allocated resource hours for the benefit of the child by the SENO using the Low Incidence Model.

The SEN teacher in consultation with the parents, class teacher and other professionals working with the child designs an IEP. The IEP will identify specific areas of need for the child and these will be incorporated into his/her scheme of work. The child is timetabled for resource teaching in September in consultation with the class teacher. Resource teaching may be conducted either out of class or in class.

Entitlement to Resource Teaching

When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 12th percentile in literacy and numeracy and/or both stage 1 and stage 2 processes were unsuccessful, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents, and may then be supported by a Resource Teacher.

Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated resource hours.

Children with learning difficulties who are integrated into mainstream education may also be allocated resource time.

Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy are usually allocated resource hours.

PROVISION OF RESOURCES

- Resources for the provision of Learning Support and Resource Teaching include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- Following consultation between the Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided from the learning support Grant, materials Grant, and/or funding that may be available through the Board of Management

• Learning Support resources will be primarily be used in the learning Support Room. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Special Education Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute in the planning and implementation of our school plan on learning support.

Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Learning Support in the school
- Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Special Education Teachers
- Provide a secure facility for storage or records in relation to pupils in receipt of Special Education
- Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in Special Education for staff.

Principal

The role of the principal is to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support in the context of Special Needs Education
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on Learning Support on an ongoing basis
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with lowest levels of achievement
- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination learning support in the context of Special Needs Services
- Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identity pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment service that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiation referrals
- Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support.

Role of the special education needs teacher:

The SEN teacher provides additional support for pupils with educational needs. The teacher identifies the pupil's strengths and needs, teaching strategies specific to the learning needs of the pupil, sets targets, and plans a scheme of work to be covered in each of the 3 school terms. This is done in consultation with the class teacher and parents. The SEN teacher supports the class teacher in their work

- Develop an individual profile an learning programme for each pupils who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
- Maintain and planning and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria
- Contribute to the development of policy on Learning Support at whole school level
- Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room
- Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Needs and Learning Support services in the school
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support

More specifically, the Resource Teacher has responsibility for:

- Developing an individual education plan (IEP) for each pupil in consultation with other partners in education
- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher, parents and principal
- Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
- Team teaching when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
- Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, e.g. psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on Learning Support, the class teacher should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in Literacy and Numeracy by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures
- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the SEN team in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets

- For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
- Long term plans of work in Literacy and Numeracy to be provided to the Learning Support Teacher in advance.

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

- Such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher
- Priority when establishing parental contact
- Group teaching
- Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
- Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
- Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
- Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
- Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
- Setting up 'buddy systems' in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring / paired reading
- Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement.

A key role of successful Learning Support/ Resource teaching is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the SEN Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes and/ or Individual Educational Plans

Parents

The role of parents supporting the Learning Support for their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher
- Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
- Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- Participation in shared reading programme
- Encouraging the child to visit library
- Developing the child's oral language
- Developing the child's social mathematics

Role of the special needs assistant (SNA):

The SNA's work is under the direction and supervision of the class teacher. Their role includes: (Circular 30/2014; Section 4)

- To support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- Assistance with assistive technology equipment, typing or handwriting
- Assisting with supervision at recreation, dispersal times etc.
- Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds: at recreation, assembly, and dispersal times including assistance with arriving and departing from school

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The various strands of the system include:

- Class Teacher and the SEN team following concerns from assessments such as screening tests or teacher observation
- Principal and/or SEN Teacher and/or Class teach communicating concern to parents following and implementing the Staged Approach of Interventions through Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus as necessary.
- Regular communication between the SEN Team and the Class Teacher, through participation in formal and informal meetings such as IEP review meetings.
- Regular communication between the SEN Teacher and parents regarding the child's progress.

Communication

• This policy will be available on our school website. All school policies will also be disseminated to parents through the medium of the school newsletter.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

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

- Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme
- Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support 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 pupil's progress
- Learning Support provision continuously focused on children from Junior Infants to Rang 2.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The implementation of this Policy will commence in September 2014. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 15th October 2014 and communicated to parents thereafter.

Signed:	(Chairperson of Board of Management)	
Dated:		
Signed:	(Principal)	
Dated:		



Rahara National School, Athleague Road, Rahara, Co. Roscommon Principal: Mr. John Burke