

Ashbourne CNS Special Education Needs Policy

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Function	Title	Version	Date
Board of Management	Chairperson	0.1	XX/XX/XXXX

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1. Overview

Ashbourne CNS is a multi - denominational, co - educational primary school under the patronage of Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB), a leader in educational provision and the patron of the largest range of schools and educational programmes in counties Louth and Meath. As a multi - denominational school, Ashbourne CNS accepts students of all faiths and of none. The medium of instruction at the school is English. Ashbourne CNS is a developing mainstream school which commenced with Junior Infants in September 2019.

Our vision for Ashbourne CNS is of a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and dynamic school that provides a quality learning experience with the learner as core. This vision is linked to the LMETB high level strategic goal included in LMETB's Strategy Statement 2017 – 2021 'Excellence in Education and Training to Achieve, Progress and Innovate'.

Students at Ashbourne CNS will feel a sense of belonging and will develop a love of learning through a positive and happy school experience. Students will be motivated and provided with opportunities to become active and responsible participants in their own learning. The school community will work with all partners and stakeholders to prepare knowledgeable and socially responsible citizens for the future.

1.1 Clarification of Key Terms used in this document

LMETB: Louth Meath Education and Training Board

CNS: Community National School

ISL: In-School Leadership

SET: Special Education Teaching

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SNA: Special Needs Assistant

DP: Deputy Principal

EAL: English as an Additional Language

NCSE: National Council for Special Education

SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely

Station Teaching: Station Teaching involves two teachers dividing the content to be taught to the class between them. Each teacher delivers a portion of the lesson to a section of the class group. The teacher then rotates. Students gain the experience of two teaching styles and points of view.

Aistear: Aistear is a curriculum framework for children up to six years of age. Aistear supports children's development by learning through play and interacting with others.

Ready Set Go Maths: Ready Set Go Maths is a numeracy programme designed to enable junior and senior infants to develop and consolidate their understanding of numbers through activities and interactive games.

Reading Support: Reading is supported through Running Records. A Running Record is an assessment of a child's reading ability using an appropriately selected piece of text. It will provide evidence of what a child is able to do, ready to learn and learning over a period of time.

Lift Off to Literacy: Lift Off to Literacy is an intervention that gives children opportunities to read books at their own level of competency and gradually lifts the complexity of children's reading and writing capabilities.

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Team Teaching: Team Teaching involves a group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate learning activities for the same group of children.

Co-teaching: Co-teaching is a collaborative approach to instruction in which two teachers, typically a mainstream class teacher and a special education teacher, work together to plan and then implement instruction for a class.

2. Purpose

This policy was developed by the staff of Ashbourne CNS in consultation with parents/guardians and the Board of Management in the school year 2021/2022. This policy is intended to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents/guardians, and other interested persons on the provisions of effective teaching to all pupils and to fulfil the school's obligations under the Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Equality Act 2004, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004, the Disability Act 2005 Education (Admission to School) Act 2018.

2.1 Aims

Ashbourne CNS is committed to helping each child achieve his/her individual potential. The provision of a quality system of support teaching is integral to this commitment. Through the implementation of this SEN Policy, we aim to:

- Support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school.
- Prioritise the needs of pupils with low achievement in English and mathematics.
- Support pupils' participation in the full curriculum at a level suited to their ability and/or their class level.
- Promote Growth Mindset to develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners.
- Involve parents/guardians in supporting their children's learning.

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- Promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of proactive strategies or initiatives.
- Provide supplementary teaching and additional support in literacy, mathematics, English as an Additional Language, and other areas as required e.g., Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
- Establish early intervention programmes and other programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning.
- Establish testing and assessment guidelines so intervention can be immediate.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals within the school community who are responsible for the drafting, updating, approval and distribution of school policies. This policy is intended to guide members of the Board of Management, teachers, SNAs, pupils and parents in Ashbourne CNS.

4. Policy

4.1 Development

This policy was developed in consultation and/or collaboration with all stakeholders within the school community.

4.2 Definition of Special Educational Needs

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) states that “all children, including children with special educational needs (inclusive of those with EAL, Additional needs, psychological needs, high academic achievers and behaviour needs), have a right to an education which is appropriate to their needs. The aims of education for pupils with special educational needs are the same as apply to all children. Education should be about enabling all children, in line with their abilities, to live full and independent lives so that they can contribute to their communities, cooperate with other people and continue to learn throughout their lives.”

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“Education is about supporting children to develop in all aspects of their lives – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.” (NCSE, 2014, pg. 7)

4.3 Continuum of Support

Special educational needs of individuals are considered in terms of a continuum and therefore support is given based on a staged approach. This continuum is based on the model of best practice outlined in *Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support* (DES, 2007) and has three distinct stages.

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. If regular classroom differentiation is not aiding the learning of a particular pupil, an initial period of 12 weeks will be utilised to observe and assess the pupil in class. The pupil will receive relevant differentiated tasks, in accordance with stage 1, classroom support. If their needs are not met, after the 12 week period, the child will be moved to stage 2 of the continuum of support.

Stage 2 – School Support

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupils’ special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the special education teachers in the problem-solving process at this

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point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan. The School Support Plan will contain targets that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. If the child on School Support reaches a desired level or target, he/she will return to Classroom Support.

A School Support document, and subsequent support, will be issued to the pupil if he/she scores below the 10th percentile in his/her standardised tests, has severe English as Additional Language needs and/or has persistent concerns after a 12 week intervention at stage 1 of the continuum of support.

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. Children on School Support Plus can be moved to School Support if targets are met.

4.4 Procedures

To support children with special educational needs, the following proactive strategies will be used:

- Differentiation of the curriculum by the class teacher to cater for individual learning needs.
- Implementation of early intervention programmes and school initiatives.
- Implementation of school approaches to literacy and numeracy.
- Development of class-based early intervention strategies to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, as and when required.

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- Involvement of parents in the development of support plans and pupils' progress meetings.
- Implementation of station teaching, team teaching, individual, shared, paired or group reading, group withdrawal and, in limited cases, individual withdrawal.
- Ongoing teacher observation and assessment.
- Assessment for Learning and a reflective action research approach, e.g., Lift off.

4.5 In-class support

In collaboration with the Principal, the DP (SET co-ordinator) and class teachers, early intervention programmes have been put in place to support children in their learning of literacy and numeracy from Junior Infants to Second Class.

Class Level	Literacy Support	Numeracy Support
Junior Infants	Station Teaching Aistear Jolly Phonics DEIS First Steps Building Bridges (Comprehension Process Motions)	Station Teaching Individual support Ready Set Go Maths
Senior Infants	Station Teaching Aistear Lift Off to Literacy Sounds like phonics Jolly phonics	Station Teaching Individual support Ready Set Go Maths

	Ashbourne Building (Comprehension Motions) DEIS First Steps Running Records	Bridges Process	Policy
First/Second Class	Station Teaching Reading support Lift Off to Literacy SWST Spellings First Steps Running Records		Station Teaching Individual Support Team Teaching

In class support for literacy and numeracy from Third Class to Sixth Class aims to support children's learning by utilising small groups during lessons. These 'small groups' of children can be delivered tuition in class or withdrawal.

Class Level	Literacy Support	Numeracy Support
Third/Fourth Class	Station teaching Reading support Team teaching SWST Spellings First Steps Spellings for Me	Station Teaching Team teaching
Fifth/Sixth Class	Station teaching Reading Support Team teaching First Steps Writing (Genre)	Station Teaching Team Teaching

	Ashbourne First Steps Reading Policy (Vocabulary development, comprehension skills) First Steps Speaking and Listening Listening Comprehensions Spellings for Me	
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4.6 Provision of Supplementary Teaching

The class teacher and SET will meet to devise a school support plan or a school support plus plan in consultation with the Principal, DP (SET coordinator), SET, parent(s)/guardian(s) and, where appropriate, the child. Each plan will include the child's strengths and learning needs. All relevant educational information will be gathered from teachers, parents, and other educational personnel when necessary e.g., psychologist's report. The SEN teacher will decide the size of the groups, considering the needs of the pupils and overall caseload.

Withdrawal of pupils is to be used as seldom as possible, but withdrawal will be provided if it is in the best interest of the child's learning. The class teacher and SET will meet once a term to review the progress of the pupil. Progress will be monitored by the class teacher and SEN teacher through teacher observation, teacher designed tasks and tests, checklists, and portfolios. A detailed review will take place at the end of each instructional term. The class teacher and SEN teacher will meet the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the child's progress.

Parents/guardians of children who are on a School Support Plus Plan will be consulted with in late September to discuss the targets of their child's plan.

Parents/guardians of children who are on a School Support Plus Plan, a School Support Plan, and a Classroom Support Plan be consulted with in January, March/April and June to discuss the plan and the SMART targets which it contains.

The Continuum of Support plans will be relevant to all pupils with additional learning needs i.e., high academic achievers, pupils with behavioural needs and pupils who require supplementary support to meet the needs of the curriculum.

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4.7 Running Records

A running record is an assessment of the child's reading ability using an appropriately selected piece of text. A Running Record requires observing and recording reading behaviours, and errors, to help determine the "thinking process" children are using to read a piece of text. It is also used to allocate an 'instructional level'. The 'instructional level' gives the teacher a point for optimum teaching and learning.

The SET team will undertake running records of all children from first to sixth class two times a year. The children in Senior Infants will have their reading assessed during the scheduled

Running Records in March and June. The Running Records will take place during the first two weeks of September (First to sixth class), the second week of March (Senior infants) and during the last week of May (Senior infants to sixth class).

The information gathered during the Running Records is discussed collaboratively among the relevant teachers. Appropriate reading groups and differentiated readers are then allocated to the children. The pupils receive their differentiated readers on a Monday.

They then undertake comprehension tasks as well as develop their fluency and accuracy over the weeklong period of having access to these books.

4.8 EAL (English as an Additional Language)

Supplementary teaching for pupils with EAL will take place over a two year period and will involve withdrawing small groups of children to intensively work on language acquisition and development. The support teacher will endeavour to:

- Assess pupils using the Primary School Assessment Kit to ensure progression in key areas – speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The data collated from these assessments will form the basis of the aims and targets in the pupil's Continuum of Support.

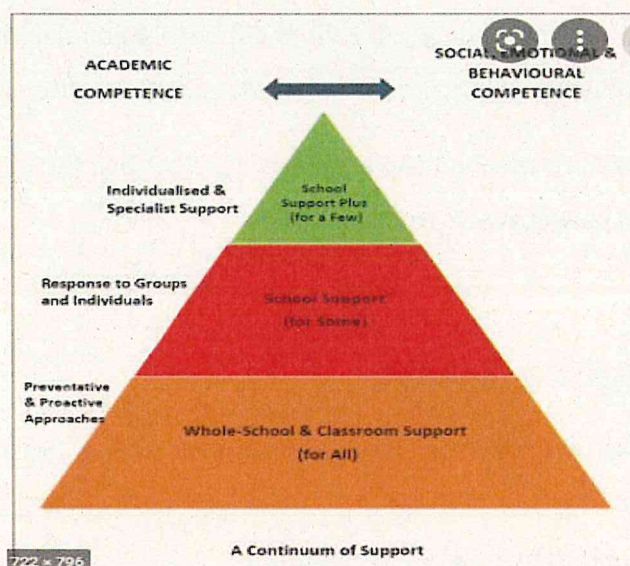
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- Collaborate with class teachers on a regular basis.
- Plan language lessons which are based on themes aligned with class work.
- Assess pupils' language acquisition to identify pupils' language needs.
- Compile School Support Plan.
- Prepare lessons based on the 'Up and Away' language programme.

4.9 Procedures for Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

In the case where it is decided collectively by the SET, class teacher, SET coordinator or Principal that Stage 2, School Support Plan, of the Continuum of Support is no longer

necessary, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by Class Teacher and/or SET and the child's progress will continue to be monitored by the class teacher. This applies to all stage of the Continuum of Support.



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4.10 Referral to External Services

The Principal in consultation with the SET Co-ordinator, SET, class teachers and parent(s)/guardian(s) will coordinate the referral of children to external services. The class teacher will complete the necessary referral forms in consultation with the appropriate educational personnel. The SET in consultation with the Principal, Deputy Principal and class teacher will coordinate the school's response to the assessment report.

Our school liaises with external professionals such as NEPS Psychologists, Special Education Needs Organisers (SENO), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) Support Service, the HSE (Health Service Executive), Early Intervention Teams, School Age Teams, Tusla and the Inspectorate. We acknowledge that the needs of many children span both health and education services. We therefore liaise with and contribute to health-led assessment and delivery of interventions and facilitate meetings between parents and various support services. We also endeavour to incorporate relevant recommendations from health professionals in developing support plans at each level of the Continuum of Support.

4.11 Timetabling

The provision of supplementary teaching in English and mathematics will be in addition to class teaching. A flexible approach will be adopted by class teachers so that children do not miss out on the same curricular area each time they are withdrawn.

Class teachers and SET must endeavour to complete their individual timetables in a collaborative manner, thus, working together to ensure that the holistic development of the learners is paramount.

The SET timetable will focus on the development of literacy, numeracy, EAL, Social and Behaviour skills and abilities. The SET will endeavour to adapt timetables that maximise literacy and numeracy supports.

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5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Ashbourne CNS Staff

The Class Teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. A particular responsibility of the Class Teacher is to differentiate the curriculum so that learning difficulties can be alleviated for pupils with specific learning needs. The Class Teacher should contribute to developing the learning targets in the Classroom Support, School Support or School Support Plus plans and to the planning and implementation of activities designed to attain those targets.

The Special Education Teacher has responsibility for liaising with class teachers to implement school procedures on preventing learning difficulties, screening pupils for learning difficulties, interpreting the outcomes of diagnostic assessments, and providing supplementary teaching and other forms of learning-support.

The Special Education Team have responsibility for the co-ordination of the Continuum of Support. The Special Education Team will liaise with class teachers, Principal, parents, and other personnel in the design of support plans. Timetabling of support, standardised testing, and the provision of resources in consultation with the Principal is also the responsibility of the Special Education Team.

The Special Needs Assistant (SNA) is responsible for the care needs of the children assigned to them. The SNA is also consulted in the information gathering stage of the School Support Plus plan and assists in the implementation of the agreed targets.

5.2 Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the school's special education programme and for the operation of services for children with special educational needs. Part of this work involves ensuring that the teachers and parents of pupils who are selected for diagnostic

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assessment and supplementary teaching are supported to meet the best of their educational ability.

5.3 The Special Educational Teachers Co-ordinator

The Special Educational Teachers Co-ordinator has responsibility for the co-ordination of all SE related activities and testing, liaising with the Principal on timetabling and scheduling of early intervention programmes or school initiatives, standardised testing, liaising with external educational personnel and providing support to newly qualified teachers in SE.

5.4 Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for the ratification of this policy.

6. Policy Review

The SET policy will be reviewed every two years. The next scheduled review for the SET policy will take place in the 2023/24 academic year.

7. Appendices

Continuum of Support

Resource pack for teachers

https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf

Guidelines for teachers

<https://assets.gov.ie/40642/674c98d5e72d48b7975f60895b4e8c9a.pdf>

**BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for
This Policy**

BOM Ratification

Ashbourne CNS SET Policy

Date Ratified by the Board of Management:	<i>11/05/2023</i>
Proposed By:	<i>Dorothy Butcherly</i>
Seconded By:	<i>Liam Flynn</i>
Signed:	<i>John J. Egan</i> (Chairperson, BOM)
Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:	<i>May 2025</i>

LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board

Date of Resolution of ETB Board	
Signed	(Chairperson)

