



Bunscoil Chríost Rí - Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy 2024/25

Bunscoil Chríost Rí strives to enhance inclusive practices within the school, both as support to mainstream class teachers and to children with special educational needs. Our Special Educational Needs Department will strive to support and prioritise children with the greatest need in our school. We aim to make maximum use of our resources and ensure that the department as a whole is a compact, well-structured and unified body whose policy is agreed by the whole school community. Henceforth in this document special educational needs will be known as SEN.

Our SEN Department has (as at November 2024):

- Eight SET teachers. We also currently have 15 SET Hours per week due to our Ukrainian/ IPAS children-this is temporary and is reviewed by the Department on a termly basis. We also have a Shared Teacher with Togher GNS, which provides us with 10 SET Hours per week for 2024/25.
- Four Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). We currently have an extra allocation of two SNAs due to our Ukrainian/IPAS children - this is temporary and is reviewed by the Department on a termly basis.
- Three EAL Teachers - 1 permanent.

Our Autism Special Classes comprises of:

- Three Classes
- Three SEN teachers.
- Six Special Needs Assistants (SNAs).

SENCO: Catrina Horgan

NEPS Psychologist: Gearóidín Farrell

SENO: Amanda Cooper

EWO: No one currently following retirement

Aims

We aim in Bunscoil Chríost Rí to provide an inclusive education for all our children. We will support every child, especially those with SEN so that they can leave school with the basic skills required to be an active member of society and have the opportunities to access the curriculum being taught in our school. In particular, the SEN department aims to provide support to:

- Children who have difficulties accessing the curriculum because of a variety of sensory, cognitive, social and developmental needs.
- Children with emotional and behavioural needs which may affect their ability to access the curriculum.
- Children who have been identified as a result of whole-school assessments, teacher observations and further specific diagnostic tests to have major difficulties in literacy and numeracy.
- Children whose first language is not English.
- Children who need extra challenges to enhance their learning.
- Children who have been diagnosed by psychologists and require extra support to access the curriculum at their own level.

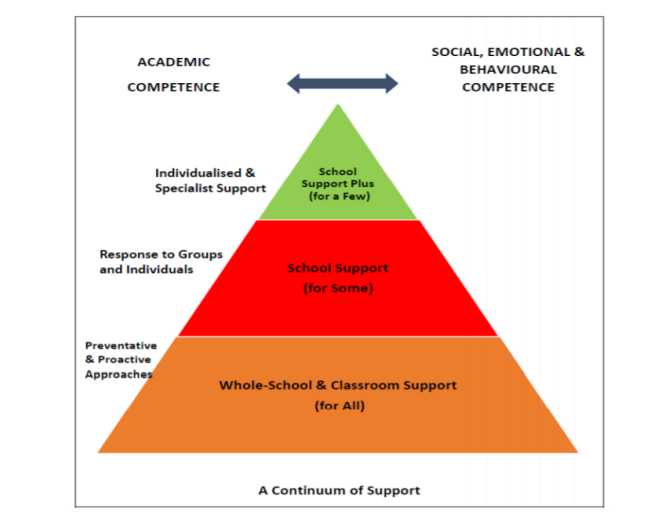
Our school will use support services such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) ,when necessary, to aid our Principal, SEN team and class teachers when identifying and dealing with children who have complex needs so that we can implement effective teaching and management policies to support them.

Considerations

Our support staff will consider all aspects of a child's development when deciding on which supports will be most beneficial to the children. We consider both academic and social development as vital areas around SEN provision. SEN children may be experiencing difficulty for a variety of reasons including low intellectual ability, limited language skills, diagnosed needs, ill-health, absenteeism, minor visual and/or auditory impairments, sensory impairments among others.

A Continuum of Support

We in Bunscoil Chríost Rí aim to adopt the model of a Continuum of Support in our school. School wide supports will be put in place with the implementation of the staged approach. The staged approach is a continuum of support where children in need will be identified as early as possible in our school and then we will implement the next steps in their education. The continuum of support fosters a step towards inclusion with the class teachers being able to draw on more in-class support to differentiate for the children under their care.



Stage 1 Classroom Support

The continuum promotes **classroom support** as the first step in responding to emerging needs. Problem-solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The class teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. The class teacher may seek advice from support staff in areas around behaviour management, differentiation of school work and observations to further support the child.

Stage 2 School Support

School Support systems will then provide support to a child experiencing difficulty through group work or more intense provision around an area of need. SEN and class teachers will especially strive to liaise and work very closely and co-operatively in the area of planning, monitoring, provision and evaluating for a struggling child.

Stage 3 School Support Plus

School Support Plus will be operated in our school to provide intensive support to children whose needs are more severe or persistent. If a child is in need of School Support Plus, this will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem-solving, assessment and intervention process and advice from NEPS may be sought. Children at this level of support will need to have a Student Support Plan (SSP) in place to map out their academic and developmental targets.

Special Class

We have three special classes in Bunscoil Chriost Ri comprising of three class teachers and six SNAs. This class is specifically for children with a diagnosis of ASD who have been specifically recommended for an ASD class. The purpose of the special class is to integrate the pupils fully by 6th class. Children in the class should have the ability to integrate to some degree in a mainstream setting by 3rd class. Children will remain in the ASD class until they can attend mainstream classes with limited SNA support.

Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a highly intensive intervention for struggling readers. We have two teachers CH/ TMcC who are specially trained to provide this intervention. These teachers will have full control and responsibility for the implementation of the programme. Tests used to identify Reading Recovery candidates are Letter Identification, Concepts about Print, Duncan Word Test, Written Vocabulary, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, British Ability Scales and a Running Record. Progress will be monitored by advancement in ability to read PM levelled reading books.

Nurture Programme

We have two teachers and one SNA fully trained to provide the Nurture programme. The Nurture Room is an in-school, teacher-led, short-term intervention focused on supporting the social and emotional difficulties of the pupils in our school. The Nurture Room Intervention is based on attachment theory and building relationships. If we teach children how to form a positive relationship with the teacher and the SNA, then they can apply these skills to developing relationships with their peers, extending to their class, the whole school and eventually into the wider society. It is a small class of pupils. Its composition is carefully well

thought-out to create a balanced and functional group. Its purpose is to offer children opportunities to revisit early learning skills and promote and support their social and emotional development. There is much research evidence that children's learning is most effective when they have a sense of emotional wellbeing, good self-esteem, and a feeling of belonging to their school community. The Boxall profile is the assessment used for children who may need Nurture support.

Roles And Responsibilities

1. Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the management of the SEN Department.

2. Class Teacher

The class teacher has the first line of responsibility for the pupils' learning needs including those chosen for supplementary teaching.

3. SENCO (Special Education Needs Co-ordinator)

The SENCO will deal with matters arising in the SEN department. The SENCO will provide information and guidance in areas around best practice in SET. He/she will liaise with outside agencies in conjunction with the Principal. The SENCO will maintain all student reports and records. Each report will be signed out if a teacher needs it.

4. Support Staff (SET Teachers)

- The support staff will provide supplementary teaching to pupils, where necessary.
- Support staff will provide screening and diagnostic assessment of children who are in Stage Two and Three of the continuum of support.
- Support staff will monitor and record pupils' progress.
- Support staff will be a link between outside agencies, Principal, parents, pupils and class teachers.
- Support staff will work in collaboration with class teachers in intervention and prevention programmes.
- Support staff will plan with the class teachers to support all models of co-teaching in the school.
- Support staff will design Student Support Plans (SSPs) for children in Stage Two and Stage Three of the continuum of support. These plans will be working documents which will be put together by class teachers, support teachers, parents and the children themselves (where possible).

- Support staff will keep plans and records of all children in Stage Two and Stage Three of the continuum of support.

5. Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

SNAs are assigned children to work with by the Principal. They will be expected to work closely with both class teachers and support teachers. SNAs will collaborate with relevant staff to complete Personal Pupil Plans (PPPs) for the children to whom they are assigned.

6. Parents

Parents are a valuable support to the school, especially when working with SEN children. Parents will be encouraged to provide the school with documents regarding the special needs of a SEN child. All parents of children in Stages Two and Three of the continuum will be invited to attend a meeting with their child's support teacher to discuss the steps which will be taken by the school to improve their child's attainment levels.

7. Pupils

Children who are receiving extra support in the school will be expected to attend school regularly. play a role (where possible), in the development and reviews of SSPs.

8. Board of Management (B.O.M.)

The Board of Management will oversee the implementation and review of the Special Educational Needs Policy and the provision of adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources.

Junior & Senior Infants

We aim to use prevention strategies in the form of intensive co-teaching in Junior and Senior infants to make sure all students have a strong base in both Literacy and Numeracy. These prevention strategies will be primarily focused around in-class group work and station teaching. These early intervention programmes will support and supplement all class-based learning. These intervention strategies will be reviewed by the SEN team and infant teachers informally during each term. The SEN department will play a role in the planning and implementation of all these interventions. Support teachers will provide extra teaching to support and enhance all children's learning. The withdrawal models for SEN provision will only be used in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the child. The children in Senior Infants will be tested at the end of the school year to determine if any of them will require supplementary support teaching in First Class. We will use:

1. The MIST test.
2. Drumcondra Early Literacy Test.

3. Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test.

These tests are being primarily undertaken in order to get information for instructional planning or to assist in the making of placement or grouping decisions.

First Class to Sixth Class

The SEN Department will provide support to children from 1st– 6th Class who are at Stage Two and Three of the Continuum of Support. The SEN Department will look at diagnostic assessments, teacher reports, attendance and social circumstances when evaluating what support a child may need. The SEN Department will aim to provide adequate support for every SEN child to access the curriculum being taught in the school.

The support provided for the children may include:

1. Co-teaching with the class teacher.
2. Small group withdrawal.
3. One to one support.

The support teacher will work in conjunction with the class teachers to decide on which support is necessary for any child. The children from 1st– 6th Class will be tested at the end of each year (late May). Children falling below the **15% percentile** will continue to be on the Supports stage of the continuum.

Assessments Used From First to Sixth Class

Standardised testing is carried out in late May using

- Drumcondra Literacy Test Levels 1-6 for 1st to 6th classes.
- Drumcondra Numeracy Test Levels 1-6 for 1st to 6th classes.

Diagnostic Assessment As A Result Of Class Screening

A pupil is selected for diagnostic assessment, following screening procedures, consultation with the class teacher and parental permission. The SET teacher (who has access to a range of diagnostic tests and guidelines on interpreting results), will proceed with the administration of the tests. The objectives of the diagnostic assessment are:

- Identify those aspects of literacy/numeracy in which a pupil has particular strengths or learning difficulties.
- To discover within a particular skill area precisely what a child can do already or has mastered.

- To locate the point of difficulty or misunderstanding and isolate the specific problem.
- To gain information which will indicate the next step that is required in the teaching programmes.

Support staff will review all children in Stage Two of the continuum in February. Support staff in consultation with class teachers will decide if a child's support will be discontinued. Support staff, where necessary, will provide extra support to classes with higher levels of need through co-teaching strategies. Support staff will be required to develop SSPs for all children at Stage Three of the continuum. These plans will be developed in conjunction with parents, class teachers, outside professionals and pupils (where possible). Support staff will be required to develop SSPs for all children at Stage Two of the continuum.

Partnership With Parents

Bunscoil Chríost Rí aims to have a strong partnership with all parents, especially those who have children with SEN. Teachers have a responsibility to notify parents of concerns regarding their children at the earliest possible signs of problems developing. We aim to enhance our teaching by using parents' knowledge of their own children thus improving their children's ability to access the curriculum and develop socially and academically. Parents will be consulted at all three stages of the continuum.

1. At Stage One, teachers will meet with parents informally to discuss strategies or voice concerns they are having with a child.
2. At Stage Two, parents will meet both class teachers and support teachers before any formal interventions have been undertaken. They will also meet both class and support teachers at the parent-teacher meeting days.
3. At Stage Three, parents will be directly involved in the implementation of their child's SSP. Parent's knowledge and expertise around their child's needs will be utilised to enhance the child's development. Parents will be formally met twice each school year to discuss their child's SSP. Support staff will provide information and support to parents of children with SEN. Parents of children with more complex needs will be met more regularly in an informal manner.

E.A.L. Policy

English as an Additional Language (E.A.L.) will be a support within the new SEN framework provided by SET teachers during the school day. Children, for whom English is not their first language, are entitled to avail of this teaching support. A child can access this language support service for two years consecutively. If a child requires continuing support after the two year period in the opinion of the class teacher in consultation with the principal and the SEN team then provision will be made to meet the child's language needs. The EAL classes will focus on developing oral language specifically when working with children who do not have English as a first language. EAL teachers will assess EAL students twice a year using the Primary School Assessment Kit.

Record-Keeping

The importance of keeping records of each pupil's progress is vital and can be of enormous benefit to class teachers, the Principal, parents and outside agencies such as NEPS. Each SEN pupil has a Student Support File and the following is the procedure for keeping records:

- Student Support Files for pupils at Classroom support level will be maintained by the class teacher.
- Children at Stages Two and Three of the continuum will have Student Support Plans (SSPs). Support teachers will maintain these files.
- The SENCO will keep all assessment reports and documents from outside agencies in secure files. These files will be signed out, if needed.
- All test results and personal information will be available on Aladdin.
- Class teachers will be updated on all developments made by a SEN pupil. They will be aware of all testing both inside and outside the school.

Professional Agencies

Support staff will deal with relevant outside agencies regarding whom they are providing support. The SENCO and the Principal will be made aware of any new developments around a child's needs or care in the school. Support staff and class teachers will jointly liaise with outside agencies, where necessary. Outside agencies will be used as a support to aid teacher's understandings of any needs they meet when dealing with a SEN child. The school will not require an official assessment to provide extra supports to SEN children.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M. on November 26th 2024.

Signed:

Signed:



Denis Bohane
Chairperson Board of Management

Eoin Fitzpatrick
Principal

Review Date: November 2027