



Holy Family NS.

Special Educational Needs Policy

Definition of a Special Educational Need (SEN)

A child with special educational needs falls into any of the following categories:

- children with a diagnosis from a psychologist
- children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- gifted children (as specified in a psychological report).
- children from disadvantaged backgrounds (focus to be on basic needs as per Maslow's Hierarchy).
- children with social, emotional and behavioural needs
- children who have not been diagnosed but have been identified as having needs in academic, social, emotional, behavioural or other areas

Aims and Ethos

Holy Family NS is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Bishop of Clogher.

'Catholic Ethos' in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

- the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person? of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects;
- a living relationship with God and with other people;
- a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Holy Family NS shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

Holy Family NS provides a secure, caring and creative learning environment for all our students.

Structure of SEN in our school:

Our school community is divided into groups.

- Board of Management
- Principal
- The SET support team – learning support and resource teachers.
- Teachers
- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- Parents / Guardians
- Children

Roles and responsibilities:

1. Board of Management

- must ensure that this policy conforms to law.
- should ensure that the school is utilising the policy.
- should also be involved in the drawing up, ratification and revision of this policy.

2. Principal and SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator)

- Has overall responsibility for the day to day running of this policy.
- Will monitor this policy in collaboration with all staff.
- Will meet regularly with the SEN team to discuss the time-line and appropriate due dates for relevant documents/ procedures.
- Will compile a list of training dates and courses which staff are attending in relation to SEN and will encourage staff to attend.
- Will compile the caseload list of children in collaboration with SEN teachers.
- Ratifies the support timetable drawn up in September of each year.
- Ensures that School Support Plans and other required documentation are produced by staff on time.
- Can discuss any support issues with the SEN team and/or parents along with the mainstream class teacher.
- Checks School Support Plans.

3. The SEN support team – Special Education Teachers:

- Are responsible for supporting their respective mainstream class teacher both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Will write short-term weekly/fortnightly plans based on the SSPs of children in their caseload.
- Should communicate with mainstream teachers with regards to children on the case-load (please see communication of progress section).

- Should work with the mainstream class teacher to develop a timetable to support children in relation to his/her caseload
- Will make every effort to ensure that SSPs and other relevant documents are produced on time and when required.
- Will engage in team teaching for literacy and for numeracy, as per school timetable.
- Should engage in regular professional development training in the area of SEN.
- Diagnostic testing when appropriate.
- Liaise with outside agencies when relevant.
- Communicate with parents to ensure best outcome for child.

4. Mainstream class teachers

- Have overall responsibility for the progress of all pupils including those with SEN in their class (in all aspects inside and outside of the classroom during school hours).
- Must collaborate with SEN team members who are compiling SSPs and student profiles for their students.
- Contribute to and carry out the in-class strategies / differentiation section of the SSPs of their students.
- Assess, on a termly basis the effectiveness of the in-class differentiation strategies.
- Engage in professional development to enhance their teaching of children with Special Educational Needs.
- Communicate with parents/guardians about their child's progress (The teacher may ask the support team to meet with parents/guardians).
- Ensure intervention steps are put in place for children who he/she has concerns about.
- To complete Classroom Support File for children in their class where applicable

5. Integrated Class Teachers

The integrated class teacher takes full responsibility for the children in his/her class as this class has no access to Special Education Teaching Hours (Formerly Learning Support/Resource). He/she designs an integration plan for children in his/her class each term in collaboration with the relevant mainstream class teacher. The mainstream class teacher has responsibility for implementing the integration plan and the learning that takes place in their class.

6. Special Needs Assistants

- Have a vital role in providing continuity for a child with SEN. Teachers (including substitute teachers) should consult with SNAs to ensure that

routines, structures and successful strategies are maintained from year to year (or any time there is a change of teacher).

- Work with the class teacher to ensure the care needs of the child(ren) entitled to SNA access in his/her care are met.
- Help to fill in the role of the SNA as part of the SSP.
- When working in the Integrated Class, the SNA will be required to undertake some duties, as per the Department of Education contract, some of which are educational in nature. These must be done under the guidance of the integrated class teacher.

7. Parents / Guardians

- Meet with teachers in the school to be updated on their child's progression at key stages in the timeline.
- Contribute to their child's SSP in collaboration with the teacher.
- Sign each SSP for their child.

Process for School Support Plan (SSP)

1. In the case of a child with a diagnosis starting school (or moving from another school) an Informal meeting with parents will take place. This may also include a visit to a pre-school or home.
2. Assessments and screening, (September): Use this time to gather information.
3. Analysis of assessments and screening: reflect on observations and any reports, look at psychological reports and cross reference to ensure that they concur with observations and assessments. Begin to identify needs that may be targeted during Support Plan formulation.
4. Child's view: To be used in conjunction with formulation of strengths and needs. Talk with the child informally – get to know the child from the child's perspective, 'My Thoughts About School' Checklist where appropriate. This is to be discovered informally.
5. Teacher input: class teacher and SNA, where applicable, to detail possible areas of strengths and needs and pre- formulation of possible targets and strategies.
6. Pre-SSP meeting: Teacher, parents and support staff record areas of strength and weaknesses/needs – collaboration of all lists forms the final list from which priority targets can be identified.
7. Building the SSP: Support staff draft the SSP in conjunction with class teacher and SNA, where applicable. In the case of an integrated class teacher, they should consult with SNAs and previous class teacher.
8. School Support Plan completion: Teacher and parents/guardians agree on the final document to be used.

Timeline

- September: informal meeting with parents, information gathering through observation and screening/diagnostic assessments, observations and analysis of response to intervention through hands on/practical work with the pupils. SSP process to be followed as outlined above once all information has been gathered and evaluated.
- End of January, Early February: Review of SSPs. Information gathering, screening and collating. The process is followed as above for SSP collaboration and formation.
- End of June: Assessment of progress (End of Year Report) based on the pupil's SSP. This will be of benefit should there be a changeover of teachers looking after this pupil. All assessments should be noted in the end of year report filed in the pupil's file.

Caseloads

Currently students with special educational needs can be allocated time based on either of the following:

Models of Support

The Special Education Teacher Allocation Model will be implemented as per Circular 007/2019.

Support Structures and Procedures

Children may receive support in the following way.

1. Receive one-to-one tuition/instruction from a support teacher either in class or in the resource room.
2. Children may receive tuition/instruction in smaller groups
3. Children may receive additional support in the form of in-class teaching support or team teaching structures that occur in school.
4. Children may be withdrawn from class to participate in social classes or activity breaks which could include use of our multi-sensory room.
5. Reverse integration may be used in conjunction with one of our specialist classes, where appropriate teaching/programmes are taking place.

Current support offered by the support team:

1. Literacy support.
2. Numeracy support.
3. Social and communication skills support.
4. Emotional and behavioural support
5. Behavioural, Social and/or Sensory related interventions (activity breaks, multi-sensory room access).
6. Transition support for Post Primary School/from preschool

Data Protection

- All staff must delete downloads when finished accessing any information.
- Please be aware that everything that is recorded in print is subject to FOI legislation.
- Do not save information / written records about children on personal laptops, please use school devices only.
- All files, written records etc. must be kept on school property at all times and must be placed in a safe place.
- The School Data Protection Policy must be adhered to at all times.

Integrated Classes

Our Autism Specialist Classes can have a maximum capacity of 6 children. Minimum staff with 6 children is 1 class teacher and 2 special needs assistants. Since September 2021 we have two of these classes. One will be a Junior Class and one will be a Senior Class, the class split will be age dependent. Our Integrated Classes are called The Rock Hub.

Enrolment

See School Admission Policy for enrolment procedures.

Overall aims

The aim of our integrated classes is to provide opportunities for children with Autism to access the curriculum in a supported environment. We aim to differentiate for all our children through a complete individualised approach incorporating a variety of strategies, assessments and methodologies. The overall aim is that children are integrated into mainstream classes as fully as possible according to their needs.

Strategies and Methodologies

(not an exhaustive list)

- TEACCH - the classroom environment, organisation, structure, teaching methodologies and daily routine are based on this strategy.
- Studio III The Laser Approach- Crisis prevention approach.
- Lámh- Sign Language Programme
- Handwriting without Tears.
- Social narratives/stories
- Schedules
- Visual Supports

- Prompting/reminders/redirection
- Reinforcement
- Soft transition to school via the Rock Hub
- Integration and reverse integration
- Sensory breaks
- Exercise and movement breaks
- Development of social skills
- Development of communication skills

*This list is not exhaustive

Please note: All strategies used must be used in conjunction with an individualised approach. Best practice may see a variety of the above strategies and more being used rather than a major focus on any one of the above independently.

Multi-Sensory Room

The school contains a multi-sensory room, which is used mainly by children in our integrated classes but also by children in mainstream classes, particularly those with diagnoses or recommendations from an occupational therapist. The multi-sensory room is a therapy room that uses light and sound to help children with sensory needs. Special Needs Assistants are most likely to be the staff members who will be using this room with children.

Integration and Reverse Integration

It is our aim and our hope that all children within the Rock Hub will integrate successfully either full-time or part-time into mainstream during their primary education experience at our school. However, at all times we aim to provide the most inclusive form of education for our children.

Mainstream integration:

- Most students can avail of the opportunity to integrate into a mainstream class for at least one lesson a week. This is child dependent and the amount of time they spend in mainstream must reflect their level of comfort, social ability and learning ability within a mainstream setting.
- Engagement takes place when the child is participating or attending in the class.
- An SNA and/or Class Teacher may attend these classes with the student(s) where applicable.
- All children must be differentiated for and this level of differentiation must reflect the strategies and methodologies used by the integrated class teacher.
- The child / children become an integral part of the class setting amongst the other students and participate in all activities to the best of their ability.
- Assessment within the mainstream class both non-academic and curricular will be completed or followed up by the integrated class teacher in conjunction with the SNAs and mainstream teacher.

Reverse integration:

Reverse integration happens when children from other classes join with children in the integrated classes for lessons.

Full-time Integration:

If a student is beginning the process of full-time mainstream integration, the following procedure should be followed. This is a gradual process of integration and should be done over a period of time.

The NEPS psychologist may be asked to provide advice and support around issues of integration before the plan for mainstream integration. Parents will be invited in to discuss the process.

Absences

If a teacher in the Integrated Class is absent, their class is not split. Usually, a support teacher or another teacher will provide cover for the day if a substitute is not available. In exceptional circumstances, a mainstream class teacher may be asked to cover in the Integrated Class while their own class is split for the day.

Staffing

All staffing arrangements are the responsibility of the principal. However, the principal will consult with staff members each year to establish the most appropriate roles. In certain cases, a mainstream class teacher and an integrated class teacher might swap classes for a block of lessons or period of time as agreed between the teachers.