

St. Thomas' JNS

Special Educational Needs Policy

Policy Summary Details

Policy Title:	SEN Policy
Written/Reviewed:	Jan '26.
Ratified by the BOM	Feb 11/2/26.

Rationale:

The revised Guidelines , which underpin circular 0064/2024 , replace the guidelines issued in 2017. The Inspectorate, The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) developed them in collaboration with the Department of Education and Youth. The updated Guidelines help schools to support children and young people in mainstream classes who have Special Educational Needs.

Contents of the Policy

1. School Context .
2. Aims of SEN Support
3. Guiding Principles - The Three Principles of Inclusion
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Enrolment
6. Special Facilities and Resources
7. Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

Appendices

Appendix 1: School Support File Template

Appendix 2: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving-framework

Appendix 3: Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers for Children with Special Educational Needs

Appendix 4: Exceptional Ability & Giftedness Policy

1. Context

St Thomas' Junior National School caters for children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class and is under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin .

The school currently has a Principal, mainstream class teachers , HSCL and Special Education teachers.

The school has Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). The allocation of both Special Education teachers (SETs) and Special Needs Assistants is subject to review.

The purpose of this policy document is to provide information to school personnel and parents on how we organise provision for teaching and support of children with special educational needs.

The term special educational needs is broad and includes children who have difficulty acquiring literacy and/or numeracy skills, children with difficulties with fine or gross motor skills, children who have English as an additional language (if that impacts on their progress) and children who have diagnosed disabilities. In this document, SEN can be taken to be special educational needs in this broad sense.

The policy is based on the revised Guidelines , which underpin circular 0064/2024 , which replace the guidelines issued in 2017 .

2. Aims of SEN Support

Our school is committed to helping our pupils to achieve their full potential. The provision of a quality system of SEN support teaching is integral to this commitment.

Through the implementation of our SEN policy we aim to:

- support the inclusion of children with SEN in our school
- develop positive attitudes about school and learning in our children
- ensure that the Staged Approach/Continuum of Support is implemented (see below)
- optimise the teaching and learning process in order to enable children with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school
- enable children to participate in the full curriculum
- support appropriate differentiation in the classroom
- support children's development both socially and emotionally
- enable children to understand themselves as learners
- involve parents in supporting their children
- promote collaboration among teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for our pupils
- promote early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and prevent/reduce difficulties in

3. Guiding Principles:

Under the New Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs In Mainstream Classes , Eight Principles Underpin the Special Education Teaching Model (0064/2024)

- Inclusive Education System
 - Inclusive School Culture
 - Collaboration
 - Wellbeing
 - Engagement and Participation
 - Child and Young Person – Centred and Needs Based
 - Evidence Informed Practice and Outcomes
 - Governance/ Accountability
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- All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community
 - The resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs, will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school

- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support
- We will ensure the provision of the model(s) of intervention appropriate for the child, including the withdrawal model, in-class support model, individual or group work, etc.

As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

Inclusion:

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document, aims to enable children with SEN, regardless of background, to participate in all aspects of school life in a way that is meaningful to them. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

Three principles for inclusion

Setting Suitable Learning Challenges

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. In order to do this, St Thomas' JNS will use the 'Continuum of Support Process' as outlined in Table 1 below to identify educational needs. Identification of educational needs is central to setting suitable learning challenges for our SEN pupils. Using the continuum of support framework, our school will identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. It is important to look at a pupils needs in context, and to use our resources to support this (for example, learning environment checklist, teacher checklist for whole-class structures and supports).

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process

Classroom Support	The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by: • Parental consultation • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Basic needs checklist * • Learning environment checklist* • Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist • Getting to Know Me form (NCSE Relate) • Literacy and numeracy tests • Screening tests of language skills A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
School Support	At this level a support plan is devised and informed by: • Teacher observation records • Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition. A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.

School Support Plus	This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include: • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.
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Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs

We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning. In planning our support, the '*Key actions in the provision of special education teaching support*' outlining the 7 point action plan below will be utilised.

Key actions in the provision of special education teaching support- Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes p 16, 17

Action1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs	Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests). Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.
Action 2: Initiate Problem Solving Process	Initiate the collaborative problem solving process to clarify concerns in consultation with the child, relevant teachers, and parents/guardians

Action 3: Record level of Continuum of Support at which special education teaching support allocated	Once needs are identified, and the level of support required is established, record at which level of the Continuum of Support special education teaching supports are allocated. • Children with emerging needs may be supported at the level of Classroom Support All. • Special education teaching support is allocated based on identified need at levels of School Support – Some and School Support Plus – Few. • Special education teaching hours are recorded on the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs (Appendix 1) .
Action 4: Organise and deploy special education teaching resources	Cross reference the needs of children at School Support – Some and School Support Plus – Few levels, and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches. • Deploy special education teacher(s) to teach groups/individuals and agree duration, frequency and location of the additional support provision. • Ensure that the children with the greatest level of need receive the greatest level of support, ideally from special education teachers with the most relevant expertise .
Action 5 Develop Classroom Support/ Student Support Plan	Develop a Classroom Support Plan for children identified with emerging needs at the level of Classroom Support -All. • Develop/update a Student Support Plan for children with special educational needs at the levels of School Support – Some and School Support Plus -Few. • Identify priority learning needs • Following identification of priority learning needs, set SMART targets for each child, aligned with their special educational needs in the Student Support Plan
Action 6: Identify appropriate evidence - informed intervention	. Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for the child with special educational needs. • Consider teaching and learning approaches best suited to promoting meaningful participation and engagement such as,

	mixed ability grouping, team teaching and/or small group teaching/individual additional teaching support. • Update the Student Support Plan to reflect monitoring and recording of response to intervention
Action 7 Review	Following an agreed period of time, a collaborative review of the child's response to intervention takes place. • Based on the outcome of this review, a decision is made whether to continue with, or amend targets. • Based on the child's response to intervention, a collaborative decision is made whether to continue to allocate support at the identified level of the Continuum of Support.

Wellbeing :

Whole School Support – All

Whole School Support refers to a school-wide, preventative and proactive approach that meets the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs. It places wellbeing at the center of school life, recognising that students' physical, emotional, social and mental wellbeing directly influence their learning and participation. A positive school culture, where every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness, underpins effective teaching, learning and inclusion.

The *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (revised 2019)* sets out the vision that wellbeing promotion is integral to the ethos of every school. It highlights the importance of strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors at individual, relational, community and societal levels. For children with SEN, careful attention to these factors across the Continuum of Support is essential.

We will promote wellbeing through four key areas: (DES 2018)

- Culture and environment
- Curriculum, teaching and learning
- Policy and planning
- Relationships and partnerships

The *Statements of Effective Practice* provide guidance in each of these areas, outlining effective whole-school, preventative approaches as well as more targeted supports. Supporting transitions is identified as particularly important, especially for children with SEN. Supporting smooth transitions in the school, such as transitions from preschool to primary school, as well as transitions within and across the school setting is very important for fostering wellbeing in school. Whole School Support forms the foundation of inclusive practice, ensuring that all children benefit from an environment that promotes wellbeing, resilience and full participation in school life.

Roles and Responsibilities

Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Children

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning. Our SEN policy envisages a whole school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, the principal, class teacher, special education teacher and the parents.

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BoM, principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

Role of the Board of Management

The BoM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special educational needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school planning. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel. The BoM:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on support for children with extra needs
- Provides adequate class accommodation and teaching resources
- Provides a secure facility for storage of records.
- The board will ensure that special education teaching resources are used for their intended purpose only to support children with special education needs in their school.

Role of the Principal

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. The principal has the responsibility for establishing, promoting and implementing inclusive whole school policies and procedures, which are supportive of the learning of all children, including those with special educational needs. He/ She will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with the SEN co-ordinator to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically
- Ensure that the children with the greatest level of need have access to the greatest levels of support.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Allow time for the special education teacher(s) for information gathering and assessment, reviewing, monitoring and coordinating provision for children with special educational needs.
- Provide annual report to BOM on use of SET resources - Appendix 3

Role of the Special Needs Co-ordinator

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs
- Organises the timetable for support teaching
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers and contributing to in-service training of staff
- Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs
- Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision.
- Lead in the identification and provision of support for children with special educational needs in the school context, using the Continuum of Support problem - solving process. 1. What is the concern 2. Why is it happening 3. How can we help 4. Did it work
- Plan to support transitions for children with special educational needs.
- Keeps a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching - assist with the completion, in liaison with Principal, SET and class teachers, of the "School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs"
- Facilitating planning for class teacher with support teacher
- Supports the implementation of a system at a whole-school level to monitor the progress of children who avail of additional support
- Keeps teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals (assisted by HSCL)
- Advises parents on procedures for availing of special needs services (assisted by HSCL)
- Selects children for psychological assessment in consultation with class and support teachers
- Liaises with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children with SEN
- Liaises with SENO regarding all aspects of special education provision
- Stores confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN children and shares same with principal, class teachers, support teachers, SNAs, other agencies where appropriate. Upload Psychological assessments to administration system Aladdin
- Participates in and or oversees the drafting of class, school and school support plus plans
- Arranges for exemptions from the study of Irish for pupils for whom this is appropriate.

The Role of the Class Teacher

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the progress and care of all children in their classrooms, including children with special educational needs. Section 22 (1) of the Education Act 1998 states the primacy of the teacher in the education and personal development of children in schools.

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued.

Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. This will include adapting their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. All mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding Information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

The Role of the Special Education Teacher

Special education teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions should be based on

careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary.

The type of support offered depends on the child's individual needs and takes the form of:

- curriculum support
- life and/or social skills training - Nurture Room Programme
- physical training/gross motor development
- speech training/communication and/or language development
- behaviour modification programmes
- assistance with sensory modulation
- development of anger management strategies
- a combination of some/all of the above
- Planning to support transitions for children with special educational needs

Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant continuum of support plan. Targets should be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed. Short-term planning should reflect the support plan targets and should break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis. Outcomes for pupils should be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes should also be used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of the special educational needs provision available in the school. Our school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school.

Role of the Pupils

Participate in developing their own plan by completing the 'Getting to Know Me' (NCSE Relate) form with the SET where appropriate.

- Be aware of the targets set for them and take part in setting new targets where appropriate.
- Take responsibility for sharing their learning difficulties with the teacher/parent where appropriate.
- Help evaluate their own progress by participating in suitable assessment and self-assessment where appropriate.

Role of Parents

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. Parental engagement is enhanced when parents are consulted in relation to their children's needs and strengths, on the supports and strategies being developed to support their children, and when they are involved in regular reviews of progress. The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. There may also be opportunities for parents to work collaboratively with the school through initiatives such as paired reading

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The Parents/Guardians of the pupils of St Thomas' JNS can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Signing and returning consent forms to the school regarding withdrawal for support teaching.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

Enrolment

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Education for Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

Special Facilities

At present, St Thomas' JNS is a single storey building with ramps where appropriate. We have two multi-sensory areas and are in the process of getting a new build where we will have much better facilities including special classes and a daily living skills learning space

Resources

St Thomas' JNS is a well-resourced school, which constantly monitors and updates its resources. I.T. provision is good and is updated regularly.

Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

1. Promotion of Literacy:

- Whole school promotion of Reading for Pleasure
- Power Hour in senior infants, 1st and 2nd class
- Print rich environment ,
- Story time, Library time, DEAR time, Book Week, Book Fair, Reading buddies, Class library, visiting authors,
- Write a Book Project for children in 2nd class
- Access to Literacy apps on school ipads

2. Early Intervention

We believe it is very important to identify and assess children with special needs as early as possible so that effective interventions can be put in place. We also believe that all learning starts with communication and language. We screen children in junior infants and make ongoing referrals for children in need of Speech and Language Therapy. We have limited access to a speech and language therapist on site and she liaises with teachers to support children presenting with language difficulties.

The M.I.S.T. (Middle Infants Screening Test) is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants during the second term of the school year. Pupils who present with scores below a given point are selected to participate in an appropriate programme.

We acknowledge the serious waiting lists for early intervention or assessment in the Tallaght area. Although it is a significant barrier to learning we strive to provide children with the best possible education despite the fact that many children with SEN have had no appropriate therapeutic intervention.

Developing Listening Skills:

Promoting a classroom environment where children listen to others, do not interrupt the speaker and wait their turn; Circle time, Listening games/activities; Listening Programmes; Listening to music.

Observation and/or assessment:

Observation: Methods in use- personal checklists, record sheet for each child, Shared observation (2nd opinion), listening to reading, General correction of homework.

Recording observation-Checklists, Personal records, reading records, paired reading, Teachers own observation.

Share concerns with: - Last year's/ next year's teacher, similar level teacher, parents, L/S teacher, SEN co-ordinator

Stages of Assessment and Provision

Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a class teacher, or other teacher, identifies a child with SEN the class teacher consults with the SEN coordinator and provides interventions that are ADDITIONAL TO or DIFFERENT FROM those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the class teacher. However, as a large portion of our support is in-class the stages are less defined than in situations where learning support is delivered by withdrawal.

Stage 1**School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs**

Register of Pupils with Special Educational Needs who are in receipt of interventions through the Continuum of Support Framework

Classroom Support						
Pupil ID	Class	Description of SEN	Area of Supports Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Type of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard	Start Date	Review Date
School Support						
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Area of Support Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Type of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard	Start Date	Review
School Support Plus						
Pupil Name	Class	Description of SEN	Area of Support of Support Literacy, numeracy, social, emotional, behavioural, life-skills	Focus of Support In-class, withdrawal in small groups or individual, school yard	Start Date	Review

Class teachers initially discuss their concerns with the child's parents.

The triggers for this intervention could be;

- The child makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are directed at an identified area of weakness
- The child shows signs of difficulty in developing literacy and numeracy skills, which result in poor attainment
- Persistent emotional or behavioural difficulties which do not respond to behaviour management techniques used by the school
- Has sensory or physical difficulties
- Has communication and/ or relationship difficulties

The class teacher completes a Stage One form and monitors the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs for half a term. If this strategy does not work then the teacher will continue to the next stage, School Action. Parents will always be informed of difficulties their child may be experiencing.

Stage Two

In cases where the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs indicates that progress has not been made, or if the results of tests are below the tenth percentile (M.I.S.T., SIGMA T, MICRA T) and teacher observation indicate this to be the case, intervention in the form of a support teacher will be accessed. Again, class teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parents. The action taken will be as follows:

- The class teacher and support teacher will differentiate the curriculum in specific areas with achievable goals to be implemented by the class teacher and support teacher.
- If there are others in the class with similar difficulties in one or more of the specific areas, then a group educational plan will be implemented.
- These programmes will be reviewed and updated every term.
- While every effort will be made to allow the SEN group/individual to remain included in class, there may be a need to work part of the programme in a SEN room with the support teacher or class teacher. This withdrawal will be time limited and for specific purposes only (e.g. Reading recovery.)
- Where progress is such that the child is no longer giving cause for concern, the child will revert to the usual differentiated curriculum available to all children.

Stage Three

When it has been identified that a child is still struggling and performing below the tenth percentile despite School Action the class teacher with the support teacher and SEN coordinators, in consultation with the child's parents, may consider the following actions:

1. Contact with NEPS psychologist may be arranged (see Education for Persons with Disability Act 2004)
2. Other outside agencies may need to be contacted, who will advise on a range of provision including IEP targets and strategies.
3. The triggers for extra intervention could be that, despite receiving an individualised programme the child:
 - Makes little or no progress over a long period of time
 - Continues to work at Primary Curriculum levels substantially below that of children of a similar age
 - Continues to have literacy and numeracy difficulties
 - Has emotional or behavioural difficulties which substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning, or that of other children, despite an appropriate behaviour management programme and School Support Plan
 - Has sensory and/or physical needs, and requires additional specialist equipment or regular visits from an advisory service
 - Has an ongoing communication or relationship difficulty that prevents social development, and act as a barrier to learning.
 - Has communication difficulties that require the assistance of an AAC device
4. In circumstances where a child uses specialised equipment, consultants will be required to demonstrate how the equipment is to be used to at least two SNAs and either the class or support teacher. The SEN co-ordinator should also be present.
5. The use of specialised yard equipment may also need to be demonstrated to these staff members. Courses will be provided on an ongoing basis to train staff in the relevant areas.
6. If the psychologist recommends an exemption from Irish the Principal will see to this under guidance from the Department of Ed. And Skills.

School Support Plan

Based on Psychologist's report, tests, the School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs the class teacher with the support teacher, SNA (if assigned), parents and representative, of outside agencies (if necessary) formulate a School Support Plan

These plans which employ a small – steps approach, feature significantly in the provision that we make in school. By breaking down the existing levels of attainment into finely graded targets, we ensure that the child experiences success.

This plan includes:

- the nature and degree of the child's abilities and skills
- the degree of the child's special needs,
- the present level of performance,
- services to be provided,
- the goals, which the child is to achieve over a period of half a year.

The strategies set out in the plan will, as far as possible, be implemented in the normal classroom setting.

The management of the strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher, support teacher and the SEN coordinator.

REVIEW of School Support Plans

The SEN coordinator will ensure that the review is conducted at the end of February. The class teacher consults with the support teacher, the child (and SNA if appointed). They agree on the expected outcomes of the plan. A draft copy is formulated and sent home to the child's parents. The parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss or make recommendations to the draft review if they so wish. Again, outside agencies may play a

part in formulating the final copy. The review will be recorded on the Review form. (Attached, Appendix 1).

Where progress is unsatisfactory it may be decided that the child continues to receive additional supports. Where progress is satisfactory, and where the child is consistently achieving targets over the stated time, a decision will be made to revert to School Action.

The review in May will be to formulate a plan , which will be part of the plan for the next teacher in September. It will be carried out as outlined above.

All School Support Plans are written up on the school administration system Aladdin Parents can be given a hard copy of the plan .

Complaints

If parents have a complaint about the Special Ed. provision made, then they should in the first instance make an appointment to speak to the SEN coordinator and then the principal.

If the matter has not been resolved the parental complaints procedure will be followed.

Monitoring and Reviewing

Pupils' progress in relation to achieving their targets will be regularly and carefully monitored. This stage of the process is informed by effective measurement of baseline performance, including the use of criterion-referenced tests and other methods of assessment (for example, teacher-designed tests, checklists, samples of work, observation) that allow pupils to demonstrate their progress. This will lead to the establishment of specific targets to be achieved within a defined timeframe as outlined below.



Monitoring outcomes is part of a dynamic process of identification, target-setting, intervention and review, which in turn should lead to adjustments in support plans. The Student Support File provides schools with a useful resource to support and record this process. It includes a Support Review Record to guide teachers when monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes with parents and pupils. Such monitoring of progress, and subsequent adaptation of support plans, are key drivers of effective practice.

In addition to monitoring outcomes at the individual level, it is also important to review outcomes at group, class and whole-school level. This review will include some of the following measures: attainment, communication, independence, attendance, social inclusion and well-being (for example, sense of belonging and connectedness to school) for pupils with special educational needs.

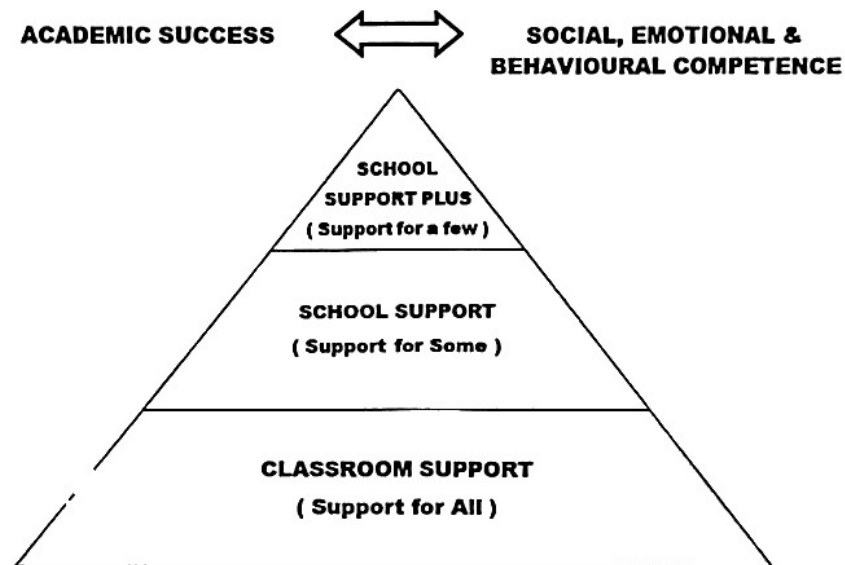
The BoM will ensure that SEN provision is an integral part of the school development plan and will evaluate the effectiveness and success of this policy by monitoring:

- the standards obtained by children with special needs
- the number of children at each of the three stages
- The level and pattern of help (i.e. average time allocated and the balance of in-class and withdrawal support)
- Views of parents
- Visits from specialist teachers
- Staff views on in-service
- Children's views

Appendix 1

Student Support Plan	
Name of Student:	
Date of Birth:	
School:	
Date File Opened:	
Date File Closed:	

A Continuum of Support



Developing a student support plan is the outcome of a problem solving process, involving school staff, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student. We start by identifying concern. We gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

Student Support File, Log of Actions

Date	Actions

Support Checklist		
Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information:	Date Checked:	Comments:
1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Consulted:		
2. Information from previous school/preschool gathered:		
3. Hearing:		
4. Vision:		
5. Medical Needs:		
6. Basic Needs Checklist Completed:		
7. Assessment of learning-screening:		
8. Observation of learning style/approach to learning:		
9. Observation of Behaviour:		
10. Interview with Pupil:		
11. Classroom work differentiated?		
12. Learning environment adapted?		
13. Yard/school environments adapted?		
14. Informal or formal consultation/advice with outside professionals?		
15. Advice given by learning support/resource teacher or other school staff?		
16. Other interventions put in place in school?		
Action needed		

Figure 1

Sign

SUPPORT PLAN**Classroom Support**School Support (Support for SOME)**School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)***To be completed by the Teacher(s)**

For help, see 'SEN, A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', *BESD: A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers* pp.71-74; *A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers*, pp. 51, 53, 54, 57.

Student's Name:		Age:	
Lead Teacher:		Class/Year:	
Start Date of Plan:			
Review Date of Plan:			
Student's Strengths and Interests:			
Priority Concerns:			
Possible Reasons for Concerns :			
Targets for the Student:			
Strategies to help the Student Achieve the Targets:			
Staff Involved and Resources Needed:			
Signature of Parent(s)/ Guardian(s):			
Signature of Teacher:			

SUPPORT REVIEW RECORD*

Classroom Support
School Support (Support for SOME)
School Support Plus (Support for A FEW)

To be completed by the teacher(s) as a review of the plan and as a guide for future actions.

For help, see 'SEN: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'BESD: A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers', 'A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource pack for Teachers', 'Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools'.

Student's Name:	Class/ Year:	
Names of those present at review:	Date of Review:	
What areas of the plan have been most successful and why?		
Since the start of the plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?		
Have the student's needs changed since the start of the plan? If so, how?		
Recommended future actions – what, how, who, when?		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s)?		
Signature of parent(s)/ guardian(s):		
Signature of teacher(s):		

Outcome of Review (tick as appropriate):			
	Revert to previous level of support- Support for All/ Classroom Support OR Support for Some/ School Support		Progress to next level of support- Support for Some/ School Support OR Support for a Few/ School Support Plus
	Continue at Current Level of Support		Request consultation with other professionals

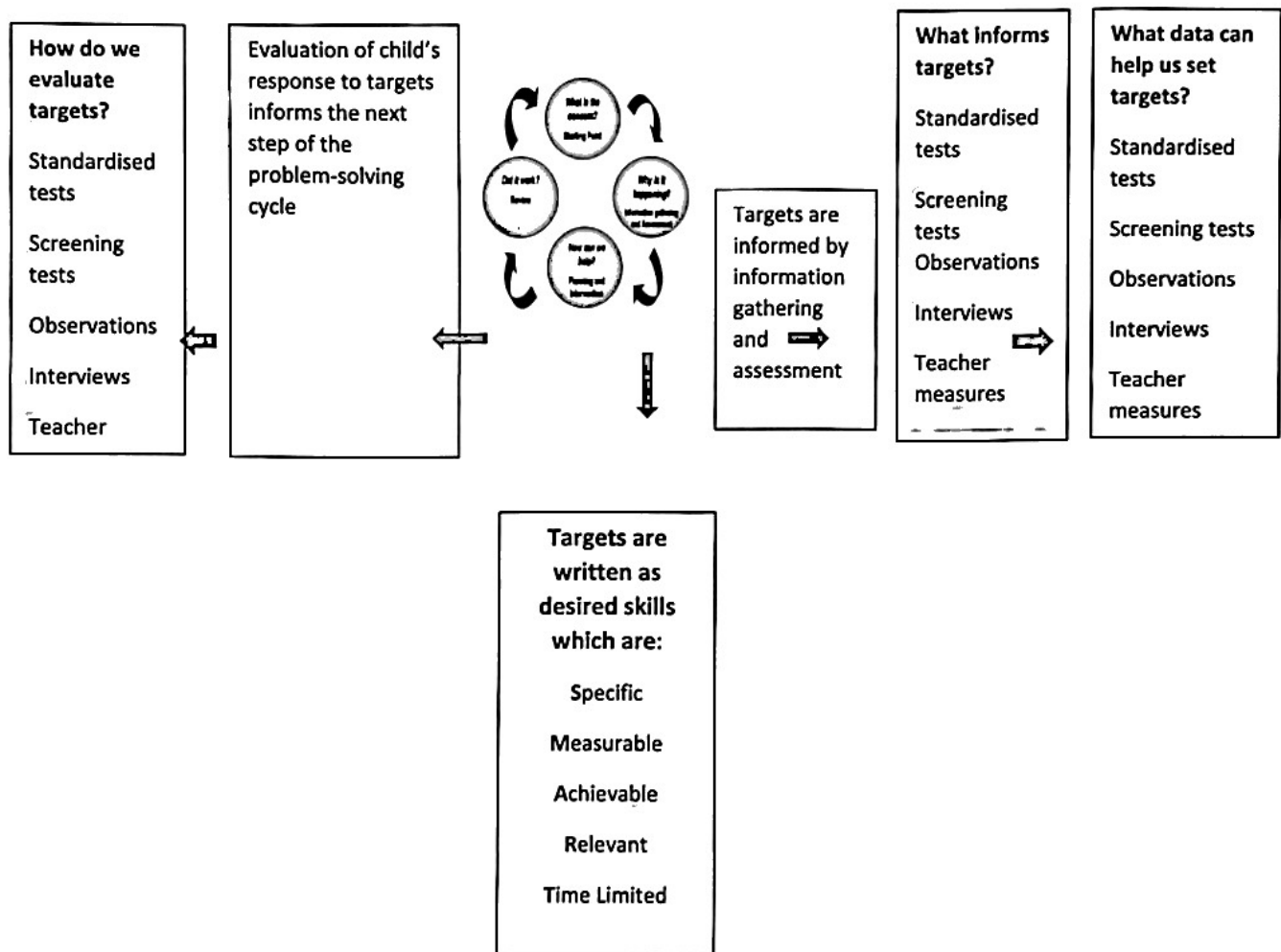
*A consultation with a NEPS psychologist/ other professionals may contribute to this review

SUPPORT PLAN REVIEW RECORD CONTINUED: FOR ADDITIONAL CARE SUPPORT TARGETS (where identified)*

To be completed by the class/subject(s) when reviewing the Student Support Plan, to inform future targets, in collaboration with parents/guardians, the student and staff supporting the additional care needs of the student.

What care targets have been most successful and why?			
Since the start of the Support Plan, has anything changed in relation to the original concerns? If so, what are these changes, and what have we learned from them?			
Have the student's additional care needs changed since the start of the plan, and if so how?			
Feedback from the student re: his/her progress			
Comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s):			
Recommended future actions—what, how, who, when?			
Signature of parent(s)/guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher(s)			
Outcome of review			
☐	Revert to previous level of support—Support for All/Support for Some/Support for few	☐	Progress to next level of support—Support for all/Support for some/Support for a Few
☐	Continue at Current Level of Support	☐	Request consultation with other professionals

Appendix 2: Target-setting as part of the problem-solving-framework



Targets should be expressed in definitive language to facilitate monitoring and review of progress,

for example:

John will correctly identify the first 50 Dolch Words with 80% accuracy

Appendix 3

Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers for Children with Special Educational Needs

(Primary) School: _____

Roll No: _____ School Year: _____

Date reviewed/updated: _____

Special Education Teaching Allocation: _____ hours

Number of full time special education teaching posts If part of cluster –

Cluster school roll numbers: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Name of base school for the cluster group: _____

Teacher Name:

Details of special education provision (e.g Team teaching, Early intervention etc)

No. of children with special educational needs supported by each special education teacher

Appendix 4

Exceptional Ability & Giftedness Policy

Definition and Background:

'An able child is one that achieves or has the ability to achieve at a level significantly in advance of their peer group. This may be in all areas of the curriculum or in a limited range'. (Eyre, 1999)

- Children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence (an IQ score of 130+, 98th Percentile)
- Giftedness is recognised as a 'disability' or special education condition in the Education Act (1998).

School Ethos:

We, the teaching staff at St Thomas' JNS have agreed to cater for those pupils who are exceptionally able in **academic** areas (i.e. the top 2% of the school population).

Those pupils who show exceptional talent in **non-academic** areas e.g. psychomotor ability, mechanical aptitude, visual and performing arts ability, will be given information regarding the relevant outside agencies.

Procedure for identification of pupils with Exceptional Ability

Criteria for Assessment:

1. A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able pupils:

- Annual standardised tests
- NRIT
- Psychological Assessments
- Teacher observation
- Parental requests
- Referral by other individuals, schools or organisations.

2. From first class onwards, pupils who score on or above the 98th percentile in the Micra and Sigma tests will then do the NRIT, NVRT and BPVS to gain a more definitive guide of their ability.

St. Thomas' JNS

3. Where a teacher observes children displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic area, then further assessment may be carried out to establish giftedness. Where it is a non-academic area, the parent will be informed of outside agencies more suited to the development of the pupil's giftedness.

Catering for Pupils with Exceptional Ability:

Pupils who meet the criteria for exceptionally able (IQ of 130+) will be catered for within the classroom based on a differentiated programme of work or if deemed possible by the Principal may be offered extension classes on a withdrawal basis, subject to the approval of the pupil and their parents. These classes will form part of each SET's timetable where feasible.

Responsibility and Management:

1. The class teacher is responsible for differentiation within the classroom, including acquisition and distribution of teaching resources for differentiation.
2. The SET team will be responsible for the assessment stage of this process, organisation of extension classes including timetabling (where applicable), acquisition and distribution of information regarding referral and assessment by outside agencies.
3. The Principal will liaise with parents, SETs and class teachers throughout the process.
4. According to guidelines for professional development, costs will be paid by thing BoM to teaching staff who attend in-service training and courses about giftedness.

This policy is subject to review following the issue of NCCA Guidelines or at least every 3 years.

Policy was drafted on Dec/Jan 2025/2026.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 11/2/26.

[Signature] (Principal)
Mary Kenny (Chairperson)