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**Special Educational Needs Policy**

1. **Introductory Statement**

This policy is a statement that outlines, informs, and guides provision for special educational needs in our school. Its development and ongoing review is informed by pertinent legislation, national guidelines, Department of Education circulars and consistently evolving best practice in this area. The policy was drafted through collaborative engagement of the teaching staff under the direction of the Principal and Special Educational Needs Coordinator, with valuable input from the wider staff team, parents/guardians, and the Board of Management.

1. **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Scoil Mhuire is committed fully to the principle of inclusion and the good practices which make authentic inclusion realisable. As a school, our goal is to enable pupils with special educational needs, Traveller pupils, pupils from less advantaged communities, and pupils for whom English is an additional language, to become fully integrated members of our school community.

Our realisation of this goal is informed by the following guiding principles:

* 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/guardians 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 level 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.

1. **Rationale**

The purpose of this Special Educational Needs Policy is to:

* Assist parents/guardians in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
* Guide school practice regarding provision for pupils with special educational needs who are enrolled in our school.
* Outline to the partners in education their respective roles in relation to special educational needs provision and to assist them to provide high quality learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs within mainstream and special classes, and where pupils are withdrawn for additional support.
* Comply with pertinent legislation, national guidelines, and Department of Education circulars.

1. **Aims**

This policy aims to:

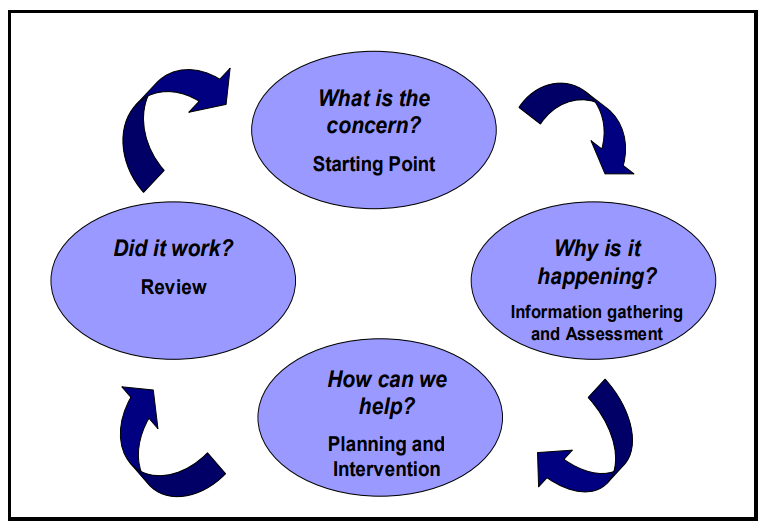
* Enable pupils of all abilities to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education in our school.
* Enable pupils with special educational needs to share with their peers as complete an education experience as is possible.
* Outline our whole school approach to teaching and learning in relation to pupils with special educational needs.
* Outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
* Provide practical guidance for teachers and other interested parties regarding the provision of effective support for pupils with special educational needs, including provision for more able pupils.
* Establish communication structures for the involvement of all the education partners in the education of pupils with special educational needs.

1. **Identifying Pupils with Additional Needs - The Continuum of Support**

In Scoil Mhuire, we use the Continuum of Support framework, as set out by the Department of Education, to identify and support pupils with additional needs. As in the framework, we recognise as a school that special educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe, and from transient to long term, and that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. Using this framework helps Scoil Mhuire to implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support, and are informed by careful monitoring and progress.

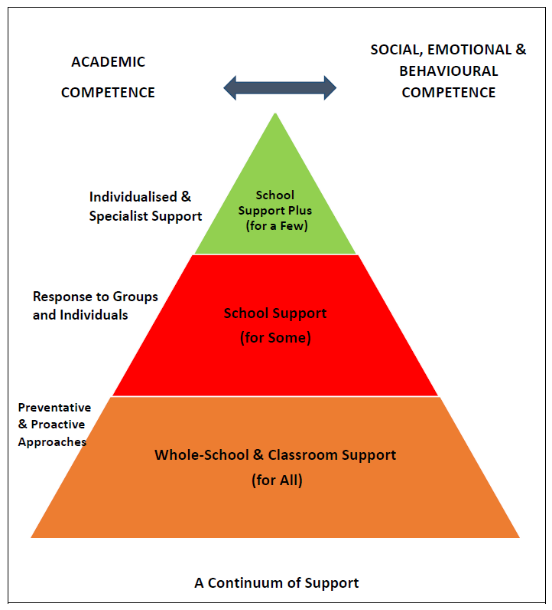
The Continuum of Support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

This problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils’ educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. This in turn allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:



**Identification of Needs through the Continuum of Support Process**

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| **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   + 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 School 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 measure for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.   A School Support Plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group 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 are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A School Support Plus Plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation. |

Intervention at any of the levels indicated in the above table will require Scoil Mhuire to open a Pupil Support File for the pupil in question. This means that all interventions that are put in place for the pupil are documented clearly. The three levels of support are:

**Level 1: Classroom Support**

Classroom Support is where the class teacher has a concern about a pupil and puts an intervention in place in the classroom. The intervention is recorded by the class teacher on a Classroom Support Plan which is uploaded to the pupil’s Pupil Support File on Aladdin once the final review has been completed. The class teacher is supported and guided by the special education teacher (SET). The plan is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. The parent/guardian is informed about this intervention and signs the Classroom Support Plan.

**Level 2: School Support**

At times, support at classroom level is not enough and the pupil requires a higher level of intervention. School Support is when a child receives extra support from a special education teacher (SET) on a particular skill area for a specific period of time. Where possible, the strategies set out in the School Support Plan will be implemented in the normal classroom setting. The SET, in conjunction with the class teacher, plans the intervention and records it in a School Support Plan which is uploaded to the child’s Pupil Support File on Aladdin once the final review has been completed. The plan is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. Parents are consulted about this intervention and will sign the School Support Plan.

**Level 3: School Support Plus**

Pupils who require support at School Support Plus level are pupils who have been diagnosed with a special educational need, who are involved with outside agencies or those whose needs cannot be met at Classroom Support or School Support level. These pupils require targeted, intensive support from a special education teacher (SET) over a longer period of time.

As far as is possible, the strategies set out in the School Support Plus Plan (SSPP) will be implemented in the classroom but it may require withdrawal in small groups or on an individual basis. The SET, in conjunction with the class teacher, the special needs assistant (if relevant) and the parent/guardian, will prepare a SSPP which is uploaded to the child’s Pupil Support File on Aladdin once the final review is completed. The plan is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. SSPPs consider the deficits that the pupil is experiencing because of their special educational need. The SSPP will also outline any care needs that the pupil is presenting with. The management of the SSPP strategies will be the responsibility of the class teacher and the SET.

1. **Roles & Responsibilities**
   1. **The Role of the Board of Management**

The role of the Board of Management is to:

* Oversee the development, implementation and monitoring of school policy on provision for pupils with special educational needs.
* Provide adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources.
* Provide a secure facility for the storage of records.
* Support staff continuing professional development.
  1. **The Role of the Principal**

The Principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of special educational needs provision. The Principal works closely with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SEN Coordinator) and keeps the Board of Management informed about the working of this policy.

It is the role of the Principal, in collaboration with the SEN Coordinator, to:

* Develop inclusive whole-school policies and practices and monitor their implementation.
* Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles.
* Coordinate 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.
* Facilitate the continuing professional development of staff in relation to the education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff, i.e. mainstream and special class teachers, special education teachers (SETs) and special needs assistants (SNAs), are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.
  1. **The Role of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SEN Coordinator)**

It is the role of SEN Coordinator to:

* Oversee the day-to-day implementation of the Special Educational Needs Policy.
* Coordinate provision for pupils with special educational needs, including organising support teaching and SNA timetables.
* Facilitate collaborative class teacher/support teacher planning.
* Participate in and/or oversee the drafting of IEPs, and classroom or school support plans.
* Liaise with and advise teachers and SNAs with regard to supporting pupils with special educational needs.
* Liaise with parents of children with special educational needs.
* Advise parents on procedures for availing of special educational needs services.
* Contribute to, sourcing, organising and providing staff continuing professional development in response to identified school needs.
* Support the implementation of a whole school tracking system to monitor the progress of pupils who receive additional support.
* Maintain appropriate records of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching.
* Store special educational needs records securely and shares these records with the Principal, class teachers, support teachers, SNAs, and other appropriate agencies, as required.
* Keep teachers informed regarding available external assessment services and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals.
* Select pupils for psycho-educational assessment in consultation with the Principal, class teachers and support teachers, and Scoil Mhuire’s assigned NEPS Psychologist (National Educational Psychological Service).
* Liaise with external professional agencies to procure assessments of pupils with special educational needs, in consultation with parents/guardians.
* Liaise with the NCSE Special Educational Needs Organiser (National Council for Special Education), in consultation with the Principal, regarding all aspects of special education needs provision.
* Guide the implementation of the Exemptions from the Study of Irish process for qualifying pupils in consultation with the Principal and as per the terms of Department of Education Circular 0054/2022.
* Coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of Scoil Mhuire’s special educational needs provision, in collaboration with the Principal and staff.
  1. **The Role of the Class Teacher**

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the education of all pupils in his/her class, including pupils with special educational needs. Accordingly, it is the role of the class teacher to:

* Provide a stimulating and supportive classroom environment in which all pupils are respected and valued.
* Plan lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom, including adapting teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern.
* Implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, including cooperative teaching and learning, collaborative problem-solving activities, heterogeneous group work, differentiation, interventions to promote social and emotional competence, and embedding IT in teaching, learning and assessment.
* Use a variety of appropriate teaching methodologies and approaches, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction.
* Develop pupils’ interest, attention, concentration using appropriate teaching strategies.
* Differentiate lessons 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 IT.
    - Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly.
* Gather information and assess pupils presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the Continuum of Support.
* Develop and implement Classroom Support Plans for pupils in receipt of Classroom Support.
* Meet with parents/guardians regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
* Collaborate with the SET, and SEN Coordinator as appropriate, to develop Individual Support Files or Group Support Files for pupils in receipt of School Support.
* Meet and collaborate with the SET, parents/guardians and other relevant staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus.
* Plan collaboratively for the teaching of literacy and numeracy with the class’s SET to ensure that the needs of all pupils in the class are being catered for and record the planned differentiation in the mainstream class teacher’s ongoing short-term planning.
* Adjust the class timetable to ensure that pupils in receipt of supplementary teaching are not absent for the same subject/activity during each session.
* Coordinate the role and responsibilities of the SNA in relation to the needs of pupils with special educational needs within the class(es) to which they are assigned.
* Liaise with and seek advice from their SET and the SEN Coordinator as required.
  1. **The Role of the Special Education Teacher (SET)**

The role of the Special Education Teacher (SET) is to provide an education that meets the needs and abilities of pupils assessed as having specific additional needs and/or pupils who are experiencing low achievement as documented in standardised and/or diagnostic assessment results.

It is the role of the SET to:

*Planning:*

* Ensure high level consultation and cooperation with the relevant class teachers.
* Collaborate with the class teacher in planning schemes of work for in-class and withdrawal support.
* Assess the needs and progress of pupils with special educational needs, including engagement with external professionals and professional reports in relation to those pupils.
* Develop School Support Plans and School Support Plus Plans for relevant pupils in consultation with other partners in education, including parents/guardians, and in liaison with other staff working with the pupil.
* Set specific, time-related targets for each pupil, agreeing these with the class teacher and parents/guardians, and making these available to the Principal.
* Complete appropriate short-term planning and monthly progress reports (Cuntas Míosúil).
* Meet with and advise parents/guardians and/or class teachers.
* In tandem with the SEN Coordinator, provide advice to class teachers in such areas as behaviour, emotional regulation, classroom management strategies, differentiation, adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, IT and other related matters.
* Participate in pertinent continuing professional development and contribute to school-based decision making regarding the acquisition of additional SEN resources and materials.

*Teaching:*

* Engage in co-teaching in the mainstream classroom in forms best suited to maximising support for all pupils, in particular those pupils with identified literacy and numeracy needs.
* Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils who experience low achievement, in the mainstream classroom or in the support teaching room, in accordance with the school’s selection criteria.
* Implement agreed programmes of learning that address a pupil’s social, emotional, behavioural or other needs.
* Coordinate and assist in implementing agreed literacy, numeracy and other programmes throughout the school, e.g. Literacy Lift Off, Maths Recovery etc.

*Assessment:*

* Assist in the administration of screening/standardised assessment and the inputting of results on Aladdin.
* Administer, or oversee the administration, of diagnostic assessments.
* Analyse screening, standardised and diagnostic assessment results.
* Use the results of assessment to inform planning and teaching.

*Record Keeping*:

* Organise and file the records of pupils with special educational needs in line with school policy.
  1. **The Role of the EAL Teacher (English as an Additional Language)**

The EAL teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of pupils assessed as being in need of such supports using the Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) for English language learning. In addition, the EAL teacher will advise and liaise with class teachers, parents/guardians and other professionals in the pupil’s interests, along with engaging with in-class support teaching in a range of subject areas.

The role of the EAL teacher is to:

*Planning:*

* Develop School Support Plans for small groups in consultation with the SEN Coordinator and relevant class teachers.
* Set specific time-related targets for each pupil, agreeing these with the class teacher and making them available to the Principal and SEN Coordinator.
* Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, IT and other related matters.
* Meeting and advising parents/guardians, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary.

*Teaching:*

* Direct teaching of pupils, either in a separate space or within the mainstream classroom.
* Co-teaching when the pupils concerned will derive benefit from it.

*Assessment:*

* Assessing the pupils’ needs and progress in relation to their English language learning using the PSAK and/or formative and summative assessments.
  1. **The Role of the Nurture Room Teacher**

Scoil Mhuire’s Nurture Room, opened in September 2017, is a form of provision for pupils with social, emotional or behavioural needs. It offers pupils the opportunity to experience early nurture experiences, giving them the skills to do well at school, make friends and deal more confidently and calmly with the demands of school life. The Nurture Room is staffed by one teacher and one SNA, both of whom have participated in extensive Nurture-based continuing professional development.

The role of the Nurture Room Teacher, in cooperation with the Nurture Room SNA is to:

* Organise the Nurture Room appropriately to provide a warm and engaging learning environment for pupils.
* Assess pupils being considered for or attending the Nurture Room using the Boxall Profile, at the intervals agreed, and maintain appropriate records securely.
* Provide small group and one-to-one interventions in response to assessment and which meet the pupils’ identified learning needs.
* Support pupils with their social, emotional and behavioural needs so that they can access learning at school and achieve their full potential.
* Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the individual pupil and maintain the high expectations required of them.
* Work closely with the mainstream class teacher to agree priority areas that the pupil might work on in the mainstream classroom, including the sharing of suitable approaches and strategies to address these priority areas.
* Develop positive relationships with the pupil’s parents/guardians and liaise with them regularly regarding their child’s progress, including onsite visits to the Nurture Room.
* Assist proactively with the cultivation of a strong schoolwide nurturing ethos through formal inputs at staff meetings, facilitation of continuing professional development and the hosting of staff member visits to the Nurture Room.
  1. **The Role of the Special Class Teacher for Children on the Autism Spectrum**

At present, Scoil Mhuire operates an Early Intervention Class (3 to 5 years) and two Primary Classes (4 to 12 years) for children on the autism spectrum, known as Rainbow. In Rainbow, we provide a high quality and positive educational experience, including access to a wide-ranging curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to our pupils’ learning needs. We work to:

* Ensure that each pupil develops to his/her potential in an environment that offers clarity, predictability and calm.
* Enhance the pupil’s communicative and social skills.
* Facilitate meaningful inclusion in the school community.

The special class teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of our pupils in Rainbow.

The role of the Rainbow teacher is to:

* Be the main point of contact for the pupil’s parents/guardians.
* Prepare a School Support Plus Plan, in consultation with parents/guardians, and in liaison with other staff working with the pupil.
* Initiate a review of the School Support Plus Plan at agreed intervals in consultation with the relevant education partners, including the mainstream class teacher where relevant.
* Coordinate the supporting work of the SNAs on an ongoing basis.
* Engage in agreed long-term and short-term planning to complement the School Support Plus Plan.
* Liaise with the mainstream class teacher, where relevant, to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate.
* Liaise with the mainstream class teacher to identify and implement accommodations that the pupil may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate.
* Lead the review of each pupil’s progress at the end of each school year, in consultation with the relevant education partners, and including an assessment of the suitability of the child’s continued placement in Rainbow.
  1. **The Role of the Special Needs Assistant (SNA)**

SNA support is provided specifically to assist schools to cater for the care needs of pupils with additional needs in an educational context, where the nature of these care needs have been outlined in professional reports as being so significant that a pupil will require adult assistance in order to be able to attend school and to participate in education.

Primary care needs which are considered significant and which may require SNA support are:

* Assistance with feeding.
* Administration of medicine.
* Assistance with toileting and general hygiene.
* Assistance with mobility and orientation.
* Assisting teachers to provide supervision in the class, playground and school grounds.
* Care needs associated with specific medical conditions.
* Care needs requiring frequent interventions including withdrawal of a pupil from a classroom when essential.
* Assistance with moving and lifting of children, operation of hoists and equipment.
* Assistance with severe communication difficulties.

If a child has been granted access to an SNA on the basis of primary care needs, the SNA will often perform secondary care associated tasks. These include:

* Preparation and tidying of workspaces and classrooms.
* Assistance with the development of a Personal Pupil Plan (PPP).
* Assist teacher in maintaining a journal or behavioural data.
* Planning for activities and classes where there may be additional care requirements.
* Attending meetings.
* Assistance with enabling a pupil to access therapy (OT, speech & language, physio) under the direction of qualified personnel.
* Assistance to attend or participate in out of school activities: walks, visits or trips where such assistance cannot be provided by teaching staff.

The quantum of SNA support provided to a school is decided by the National Council for Special Education in accordance with Department of Education policy. The provision of a quantum of support to Scoil Mhuire gives us the autonomy and flexibility to manage our allocation of SNA support in order to utilise this support to the best possible effect. It allows us to target support to those pupils who have the greatest degree of need at any given time, recognising that the level of need that a pupil may have may be variable over time. Scoil Mhuire is in a position to use our educational experience and expertise to manage the level of support which has been allocated to us to provide for the care needs of identified pupils as and when those needs arise and to provide access to SNA support for all pupils who have been granted access to support.

SNA duties are assigned at the discretion of the Principal, in consultation with the SEN Coordinator. The work of SNAs is monitored by the Principal and SEN Coordinator on an ongoing basis and modified accordingly by them.

In circumstances where a pupil is accessing SNA support, and where a parent/guardian feels that their child is not receiving sufficient SNA access in school, the parent/guardian should raise this concern in the first instance with the Principal.

* 1. **The Role of Parents/Guardians**

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 child’s needs and strengths, on the supports and strategies being developed to support their child, 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/guardians and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of special educational needs provision available at school. We consult with parents/guardians 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 child in transitioning through the school.

Parents/guardians can prepare for and support the work of the Scoil Mhuire by:

* Supervising, assisting with, showing an interest in and signing homework.
* Reading and telling stories to their child.
* 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 schoolwork.
* 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 child’s learning.
* Helping their child to develop their organisational skills.
* Helping their children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the child for use at home.
* Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

1. **Programmes in Use to Support Pupils with Additional Needs**

Scoil Mhuire uses a wide range of programmes to meet the needs of our pupils and we are always adding new and innovative programmes to enhance teaching and learning. Our special education needs team is trained in the use of the following programmes and draws on them regularly.

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| **Literacy**   * Reading Recovery * Literacy Lift Off * SNIP Literacy Programme * Newell Literacy Programme * Reading Eggs * See and Learn * Edmark Reading Program * Spellings for Me * Read Write Inc * Hornet Literacy Primer, Word Wasp & Toe by Toe * Stareway to Spelling | **Numeracy**   * Maths Recovery * Plus 1 & Power of 2 * Perform with Time * Numicon * Six Bricks | **Speech & Language**   * Colourful Semantics * Lámh * Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) * Rapid Prompting Method (RPM) * See and Learn * Six Bricks |
| **Gross Motor**   * Smart Moves * Braincalm * TACPAC * Six Bricks | **Fine Motor**   * Handwriting Without Tears * Smart Moves * Rainbow Fine Motor Programme * Theraputty Programme | **Social Skills**   * Lego Club * Six Bricks * Social Stories * Secret Agent Society (SAS) * Attention Autism * Weaving Wellbeing * Zones of Regulation * TEACCH Autism Program * Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) |

1. **Transition Planning**

In Scoil Mhuire, we place a lot of emphasis on supporting pupils to manage transitions. In June of each year, a transition programme is completed at whole-class level for all pupils to help the pupils make a successful transition to their new class. The transition programme can include any of the following:

* A visit to the new classroom.
* The new class teacher will visit the class and engage in an activity with the class.
* The class is introduced to the new line up area on the yard.
* A question and answer session is facilitated with the new class teacher or with pupils from the year group that the pupil is moving to.

Some pupils with special educational needs may need some extra support to aid their transition to a new class. The transition plan for these pupils may include the following:

* Communication Passport
* Social story
* New class teacher works with the pupil with special educational needs in a small group
* One to one pairing sessions with the new class teacher and pupil with special educational needs
* A transition booklet.

A transition plan may also be prepared for pupils who are transferring from preschool or another primary school to Scoil Mhuire, or from Scoil Mhuire to another primary school or to a special school.

For a pupil with special educational needs transferring to post-primary school, a transition plan may include the following:

* A visit to the new school as part of a large group and a follow up visit in a smaller group.
* A meeting with relevant post-primary staff to communicate pertinent information.
* A review by a NEPS psychologist.

1. **Provision for Exceptionally Able & Gifted Pupils**

Scoil Mhuire continually strives to meet the needs of all its pupils, including our exceptionally able and gifted pupils. Giftedness is recognised as a special education condition in the Education Act (1998) and the NCCA *Exceptionally Able Students: Draft Guidelines for Teachers*, 2015 identifies such students as those who require opportunities for enrichment and extension that go beyond those provided for the general cohort of students. In general, children who are considered gifted may have been assessed by a psychologist and found to have a high level of intelligence, that is an IQ score of 130+, or achieving at the 98th percentile or above.

In Scoil Mhuire, we aim to make additional provision for pupils who are exceptionally able in academic areas, namely the top five percent of the general primary school population.

A range of strategies may be used to identify exceptionally able and gifted pupils:

* Annual standardised assessment
* Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT) and Verbal Reasoning Test (VRT)
* Psychological assessment
* Teacher observation
* Parental requests
* Referral by other individuals, schools or organisations.

From 2nd Class onwards, pupils who score at or above the 98th percentile in standardised assessment will then complete the NVRT/ VRT and British Picture Vocabulary Scale (BPVS) to gain a more definitive guide of their ability.

Where a teacher observes pupils displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic area, further assessment may be carried out to establish giftedness.

Where a teacher observes children displaying exceptional ability in a specific academic or non-academic area the parents/guardians will be informed of outside agencies suited to the development of the pupil’s giftedness, for example the Dublin City University Centre for Talented Youth.

Pupils in Scoil Mhuire who are identified as functioning in the top five per cent of the general school population will be catered for within their mainstream classroom through the provision of differentiated programmes of work. Opportunities may also be provided for pupils to work together in small groups outside the classroom on subject areas of particular interest to them, with the support of a special education teacher (SET). Such Extension Groups will work collaboratively over a period of weeks and topics addressed may include Art, Science, Maths, History, debating, chess, and problem solving.

1. **Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology may be grant aided by the Department of Education to individual pupils whose degree of physical and/or communicative disability is such that without technological support it would not be possible for them to access the school curriculum. Further details as to how assistive technology is organised in Scoil Mhuire, can be found in our Assistive Technology Policy.

1. **Diversity Awareness**

In Scoil Mhuire we are committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated. Throughout the school year we run a series of information days/weeks to raise awareness and develop understanding of disabilities that impact some of our pupils.

Our diversity awareness activities include:

* The 21st March is World Down Syndrome Awareness Day. We mark this day by wearing odd socks. We talk about Down Syndrome at school assemblies and share information with our families on School Story.
* April is Autism Acceptance Month. We run our school’s Autism Acceptance Week during the month of April. We host an Autism Acceptance Assembly, organise class-based activities, share lots of videos and everyone wears something blue on the Friday of that week. Autism Acceptance Week usually coincides with our annual Blue 5km, which is our annual fundraiser for Rainbow.
* October is Dyslexia & ADHD Awareness Month. Again, we host an Information Assembly on Dyslexia & ADHD, organise class-based activities, share lots of videos and include a special element for parents/guardians during the week.

1. **Success Criteria**

The schoolwide implementation of this policy will result in:

* The effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in our school and the successful meeting of their diverse learning needs.
* Pupils with special educational needs being identified and assessed in a timely manner.
* The effective schoolwide implementation of the Continuum of Support.
* The provision of high quality teaching and learning experiences to those pupils most in need of additional support.
* High quality communication and collaboration between school personnel, parents/guardians, and external agencies.
* Positive progress in the learning of our pupils with special educational needs and in their sense of themselves as learners.

1. **Ratification & Communication**

This Special Educational Needs Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 20 November 2018 following consultation with staff and parents/guardians. It has been made available to school personnel via our Google Shared Drive and is published on the school website.

1. **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The implementation of this Special Educational Needs Policy will be monitored by the Principal, SEN Coordinator and Board of Management, in consultation with school staff and parents/guardians. It was reviewed and updated on 25 April 2023 and will continue to be reviewed from time to time.

Monsignor Denis Lennon Dr Mags Jordan

Chairperson of Board of Management           Principal/Secretary to Board of Management

25 April 2023 25 April 2023