



ST. DAVID'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) PROVISION POLICY

This Policy on SEN Provision in St David's N.S. contains the following elements:

1. SITUATION
2. ALLOCATION
3. AIMS OF SEN SUPPORT
4. PRINCIPLES
5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
6. ROLES OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
7. ROLES OF THE PRINCIPAL TEACHER
8. ROLES OF THE CLASS TEACHER
9. ROLES OF PARENTS
10. ROLE OF PUPILS
11. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION
12. STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORT
13. EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES
14. SELECTION CRITERIA
15. PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS
16. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THIS POLICY

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) POLICY

1. SITUATION

St David's N.S. is allocated 2 full time Special Education teachers as of September 2024 under the New Model (combined learning-support/resource teachers).

St David's N.S opened a special class in November 2023. The class is currently at capacity with 6 pupils allocated, as per NCSE and school policy guidelines. This class has an undisputed allocation of 2 SNAs at all times.

Our school has been allocated 5.66 SNAs. One SNA is allocated solely for an individual pupil in the special class and this allocation will dissolve when this child leaves the school. Our SNAs cater for all SEN care needs in the special class and mainstream classes as per NCSE decision. Our SNAs rotate their position around the school on a rolling basis throughout the year (between mainstream and special class).

2. Allocation:

Total Allocation to St David's NS for the 2024/2025 academic year until the next review date in 2026 is 50 hours.

We are also in receipt of 10 hours of EAL support for the 2025/2026 academic year.

3. AIMS OF SEN SUPPORT

- To support the inclusion of SEN pupils in primary schools;
- To ensure that the NEPS Continuum of Support is implemented;
- To acknowledge "that pupils require different levels of support depending on their identified educational needs" (Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools)
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support in English and/or Mathematics;
- To enable pupils to participate in the full curriculum;
- To encourage differentiation in the classroom;
- To develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in pupils;
- To support attainment, behavioural, social and emotional functioning;
- To enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners;
- To involve parents in supporting their children through effective parent-support programmes;
- To promote collaboration amongst teachers in the implementation of whole-school policies on learning support for pupils;
- To establish early intervention programmes designed to enhance learning and to prevent/reduce difficulties in learning;
- To guard the self-esteem and self-image of the learner.

In line with our Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy, **pupils with the highest level of need**, as identified by the teaching staff, through ongoing assessment and observation, **will receive the greatest level of support**. The allocation of resources and support will prioritise those children who require the most assistance to access the curriculum effectively. This includes academic, social and/or emotional support, as necessary. This ensures that the school's SEN resources are distributed equitably, focusing on providing intensive intervention to those with the most significant needs while maintaining a flexible approach to meet the diverse requirements of all pupils.

4. PRINCIPLES

Effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

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- Quality of teaching.
 - Effective whole-school policies;
 - Provision of resources towards pupils in/with greatest need;
 - Implementation of a staged approach to support provision at Classroom Support/School Support/School Support Plus;
 - Provision of the model of intervention most appropriate to the pupil and the difficulty they are experiencing:
 1. Withdrawal Model:
 - 1:1 interventions (vital when, for example, difficulties are very significant; when pupil needs do not match to form a small group).
 - Small group interventions
 2. In-Class Support Model:
 - Station teaching /Team-teaching/Peer tutoring etc
 - Collaboration between teachers

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of supporting learning is a collaborative responsibility shared by all of the school community: The Board of Management; principal teacher; class teachers; support teachers; SNAs; parents; pupils and external bodies & agencies. It is important that everyone contributes to the implementation of our school plan on SEN provision.

6. Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management shall:

- Oversee the development, implementation and review of the SEN policy.
 - Ensure that satisfactory classroom accommodation is provided for the support teachers.
 - Ensure that adequate teaching resources are provided for the support teachers to meet the individual needs of pupils.
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- Provide secure facilities for the storage of records relating to pupils in receipt of SET

7. Role of the Principal Teacher

The Principal Teacher/Leadership Team is required to:

- Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policies on special educational needs in co-operation with the support teachers;
- Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning-support and special educational needs;
- Monitor the implementation of the school plan on SEN and special needs on an ongoing basis;
- Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with very low achievement/standardised test scores/in-school assessments/clear learning difficulties that negatively affect them accessing the curriculum to the best of their individual ability
- ~~Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need;~~
- Keep teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals;
- Help teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning-support by providing opportunities to attend specific courses, targeted to the differing learning needs/diagnoses of pupils with whom they work
- Encourage and facilitate staff members to attend CPD courses;
- Organise and co-ordinate the construction of Support Plans, ensuring that individualised planning takes place;
- Ensure that pupils who have been allocated SEN provision receive it;
- Organise the funding and provision of appropriate assessment tests; We regularly review the assessment and screening tests we use to ensure a balance between meeting the needs of our pupils and providing essential information for appropriate support.
- Complete application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS alongside special education/classroom teachers
- Assume direct responsibility for co-ordinating SEN and special educational needs services;
- Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and/or special educational services;
- Co-operatively co-ordinate the caseloads/work schedules of the support teachers;
- Oversee and organise the implementation of a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties;
- Advise parents on procedures for availing of special educational needs services;
- Ensure that SEN provision is delivered within St David's N.S Child Protection Guidelines;
- Liaise with external agencies such as psychological services to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special educational needs;

SET undertake the following duties:

- Take responsibility for formulating and updating the school's SEN policy in conjunction with the principal and all teachers.

- Ensure that SEN provision in St David's NS is delivered within the terms of the school Child Protection Guidelines;
- Identifying the level of support that is needed to best meet the pupil's needs, in conjunction with the principal, class teacher and parents;
- Overseeing the implementation of a whole-school/class level assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with the lowest academic scores so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need;
- Consulting with class teachers on both the social/emotional and academic needs of pupils who may need diagnostic assessment/individualised programs, taking into account:
 1. the pupils' scores on an appropriate standardised screening measure;
 2. teachers' own views of the pupils' difficulties and needs;
 3. class teacher observation notes/classroom support plans
 4. Support Teacher caseload.

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- Co-ordinating relevant assessments for each pupil who has been identified as experiencing low academic achievement and/or social/emotional difficulties;
 - Keeping teachers informed about external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals, if/and when requested.
 - Researching current assessments for primary schools, if/as applicable;
 - Maintaining assessment tests;
 - Assisting deputy principal when ordering standardised assessment scripts each year;
 - Assisting deputy principal in distributing standardised assessment scripts to class teachers each year;
 - Advising class teachers about Support Plans, when requested.
 - Supporting the principal teacher to implement a tracking system at whole-school level to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties;
 - Completing application forms for outside agencies such as NCSE; NEPS; CAMHS etc, in collaboration with class teachers and the principal teacher, as required;
 - Advising on transition to secondary school, when requested.

8. Role of the Class Teacher

Effective teaching and learning:

- Differentiating as necessary and using a wide range of teaching methodologies to best meet individual needs;
- Adapting and utilising suitable resources, including the use of technology;

Stage 1 - Classroom Support

- Stage 1 of the Staged Approach and NEPS' Classroom Support requires class teachers to support their pupils' learning, in the first instance;
- Pupils will be placed on Classroom Support for 6/8 weeks and if no improvement has been noted, the pupil may be moved on to the next level of support; School Support. Withdrawal of the pupil by support teacher for more intensive intervention may be considered, if the timetable allows

- Stage 1 - Classroom Support will continue if/and when School Support/School Support Plus is being phased out or discontinued, to meet the pupil's changing needs.

Stage 2 - School Support

At Level 2, School Support is provided for students who require more targeted interventions than those available at the classroom support level. Support at this level may involve small group withdrawal, individualised teaching led by a special education teacher, station teaching or team teaching. Progress is monitored closely, and a School Support Plan is developed in collaboration with teachers, parents, and where appropriate, the pupil.

Stage 3 - School Support Plus

Level 3, also known as *School Support Plus*, is the highest level of support provided within the Continuum of Support framework for pupils with complex and/or enduring needs. At this level, tailored and intensive support is delivered, often involving collaboration with external professionals such as NEPS psychologists or therapists. Support plans are highly individualised, based on thorough assessments, and regularly reviewed to ensure the pupil's progress and wellbeing. The goal is to enable full participation in school life and to maximise each pupil's learning potential in an inclusive environment. Such plans are developed in collaboration with the class teacher, special education teacher/s, parents and the pupil, where appropriate.

The continuum of support involves ongoing monitoring and reassessment of each child's progress by all parties. Children may receive different types of support and can move along the continuum as needed.

Support Plans:

- The Staged Approach requires class teachers to construct a simple, individual plan of support, to implement the plan and review its success regularly, before referring the child for Stage 2 interventions. The class teacher will open a Support Plan for the pupil at Stage 1 - Classroom Support level of interventions, including targets, interventions and progress;
- In so far as possible, the school will endeavour to withdraw pupils for support who are achieving at or under the 12th percentile in literacy and/or numeracy. However, the overall needs of the school must be taken into consideration, alongside the social and emotional needs of the pupils. Furthermore, in accordance with the 2024 Continuum of Support Guidelines, which emphasise professional judgement and diagnostic assessment over test scores alone, this 12th percentile cut-off may vary from year to year.
- The class teacher will collaborate with SET to complete and update the Support Plan at School Support and School Support Plus levels
- Log actions in the Support Plan;
- For each pupil who is in receipt of support at School Support/School Support Plus, the class teacher will collaborate with the support teacher in the development of a Support Plan by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve those targets;
- A key role of successful support is a high level of consultation and co-operation between the class teacher and the special education teacher. Central to this consultation is the

development, implementation and review of Support Plans. This will be achieved through consultation time between classroom teacher and support teacher every 4 - 6 weeks and through informal consultation as the need arises.

Communicating with Parents:

- It is accepted practice for class teachers to consult with the parents of all pupils in the class from time to time. For parents of pupils who are in receipt of support teaching/on a classroom support plan, time will be given to consult with them, as necessary.
- In the case of each pupil on any level of the continuum of support, the class teacher should:
 - i. Make parents aware of concerns about their child's progress;
 - ii. Outline the relevant level of support that would best cater for their needs (Classroom Support/School Support or School Support Plus);
 - iii. Inform parents that a meeting with the support teacher(s) and/or the class teacher may follow diagnostic assessments;
 - iv. Attend, if possible, the meeting between the pupil's parents and the support teacher(s);
 - v. Collaborate with parents and support teachers on the formation of a Support Plan;
 - vi. Parental permissions for school-based tests/assessments is sought when the child enrolls in our school and is retained in the pupils' files in the office.

9. Role of Parents

Parents can support the work of the school in supporting their child by:

- Providing a home environment in which there are opportunities for adults and children to participate together in language, literacy and mathematical activities in the early years before formal schooling begins.
- Talking positively about school and school-work. Availing of real-life situations to discuss the importance of language, literacy and mathematics;
- Modelling involvement in language, literacy and mathematical activities at home by engaging in and talking about these activities.
- Working on agreed targets at home;
- Parents should keep the class teacher informed of the progress that they observe in their child's learning at home. They should also let the school know of any learning difficulties that they observe in their child at home.
- It is the responsibility of parents to furnish the school with any and all relevant reports they receive from external professionals/agencies regarding their children

10. Role of Pupils

Pupils who are in receipt of support teaching should, as appropriate:

- Outline his/her interests, aspirations, strengths;
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment;
- Contribute to the Support Plan;
- Become familiar with the medium and short-term learning targets that have been set for them and, where applicable, they should be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of such targets;
- Contribute to the selection of texts and other learning materials that are relevant to the attainment of their learning targets;
- Develop ‘ownership’ of the skills and strategies that are taught during support teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.

11. Early Intervention

Early intervention is a critical component of our approach to supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in St. David’s National School. By identifying and addressing learning difficulties at the earliest possible stage, we aim to provide targeted support that can prevent challenges from becoming more complex over time. Early intervention allows us to tailor educational strategies and resources to meet the individual needs of each child, fostering their academic, social, and emotional development. This proactive approach ensures that all pupils, regardless of their needs, have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Our staff engage in on-going training to recognise signs of potential learning difficulties and collaborate with parents/guardians and external professionals to implement effective interventions. Early intervention is key to promoting inclusion, minimising barriers to learning, and improving long-term outcomes for every child.

- Close collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and the support teachers, should identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Teacher observation and professional opinion will be given due consideration in the selection of pupils requiring additional support during early intervention time

12. Strategies for support

Our strategies to support all pupils in our school include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of English and Mathematics in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class. (See Plean Scoile for English and for Mathematics);
- Careful development of phonological awareness and rhyming skills in the infant classroom, before the introduction of formal reading of words and books.
- The use of concrete materials at every opportunity;
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties;
- Close collaboration and consultation between the infant teachers and the support teachers;
- Thorough assessment procedures throughout the school;
- Provision of additional support in language development/early literacy/early mathematical skills, where possible

- In-class support at various times of the year to all classes, with a focus on early intervention throughout the year also

13. Selection Criteria:

Selection Criteria for Providing Pupils with Additional Teaching Support:

- *Standardised tests are used to screen and identify pupils' performance in reading and mathematics.*
- *Pupils with significant learning, behavioural, emotional, physical and sensory needs*
- *Pupils who reach the 12th percentile or below in literacy and/or numeracy*
- *If Classroom Support has not sufficiently met the child's needs after 6/8 weeks, and if time can be made available on the support teacher's timetable, these pupils may be in receipt of support time*
- *EAL support teaching time will be given to the pupils who qualify under Department of Education's criteria*

The principal and support teachers will look at the whole-school needs when allocating support time to pupils. This timetable will endeavour to be flexible as needed.

Support may be provided to pupils at Classroom Support/School Support/School Support Plus level of the NEPS' Continuum of Support.

14. Parent-Teacher Meetings

The nature of SEN support means that meetings with parents are on-going and regular. Effective communication with parents is critically important to the success of a support programme.

15. Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy

The Principal and SEN teacher/s have overall responsibility currently for monitoring and reviewing this SEN Policy.

It is an ongoing and developmental process. Staff and Board of Management will engage in the developmental process, and the policy will be reviewed as necessary.

RATIFICATION

This policy will take effect from May 2025. It will be subject to review during the 2026 academic year, or earlier if there are changes in legislation or practice. Additionally, it may be revised following any updates to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) allocation model by the Department of Education.

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **date below**.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 30 / 9 / 25

Signed: [Signature] Chairperson [Signature] Principal

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Classroom support plan

Appendix 2

Student Support File

Classroom Support Plan



NAME:

D.O.B.:

CLASS:

DATE:

OUR CONCERNS ARE:	REVIEW – DATE & COMMENT
WE THINK IT MAY BE HAPPENING BECAUSE:	
SOME STRATEGIES WE WILL ADAPT ARE:	
WE WILL KNOW THINGS HAVE IMPROVED WHEN:	
WE WILL REVIEW (date, time and convenor)	

Signed: Teacher _____

Parents:

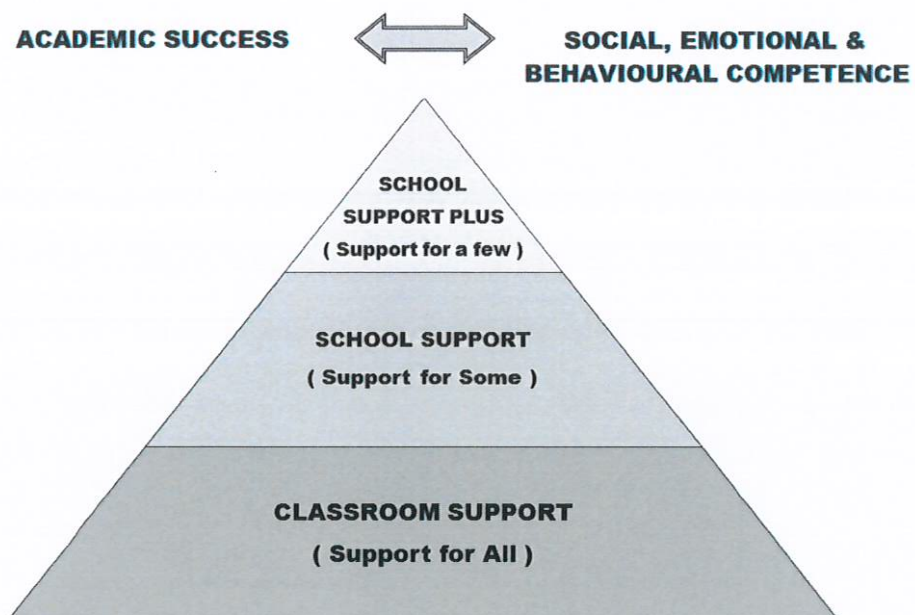
FIRST REVIEW DATE:	ATTENDING
SECOND REVIEW DATE:	

Appendix 2



STUDENT SUPPORT FILE	
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 concerns, we gather information, we put together a plan and we review it.

Support Checklist

Name:	Age:	Class:
General Information	Date Checked	Comments
1. Parents/ Guardians 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		

Helpful references: SEN: A Continuum of Support: Resource Pack for Teachers, pp. 13-16, 18 to 20; BESD: A Continuum of Support, p 7; A Continuum of Support for Post-Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers, pp32-36; Student Support Teams in Post-Primary Schools, pp20

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			

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

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, and if so how?		
Recommended future actions – <i>what, how, who, when?</i>		
Any comments from the student?		
Any comments from the parent(s)/guardian(s) comment?		
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.