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SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS POLICY SEPTEMBER 2018

Introductory Statement

This SEN policy was agreed by mainstream teachers and the SEN team.

The Special Needs department in St. Comán's Wood Primary school consists of 15 full-time Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers and 11 Special Needs Assistants. The team includes a teacher with a Masters in Special Education, four members with post-graduate Diplomas in Special Education and two teachers trained in *Reading Recovery*. The Board of Management has appointed Frances Mitchell, Assistant Principal as the co-ordinator of Special Needs in the school. An SEN teacher may be assigned to meet the needs of children with resource hours/ learning support hours and/or EAL. This promotes an integrated, team approach.

The following acts have been referenced in compiling this Special Needs Policy: Education Act (1998), Equal Status Acts (2000-2011), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), Education for Persons with SEN (EPSEN, 2004), Disability Act (2005). The Special Education Circular SP ED 02/05 and the DES resources published by the National Educational Psychological Service titled "Special Educational Needs: A Continuum of Support" including the following: a) Resource Pack for Teachers b) Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties c) Guidelines for Teachers, all inform this policy.

Rationale:

St. Comán's Wood Primary School needed a policy in line with legislation and Department circulars.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of School:

Inclusion:

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) states that

“A child with SEN shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the degree or nature of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with the best interests of the child.”

St. Comán's Wood Primary School is an inclusive environment which embraces and celebrates the uniqueness of every pupil. St. Comán's Wood Primary School strives to nurture and cater for the needs of all pupils within the school. Pupils with SEN are integrated into mainstream classes; they receive instruction in all areas of the Revised Primary School Curriculum and receive additional support where necessary. Pupils from the Speech and Language class are included in mainstream classes for Aistear,

physical education, religious instruction and other areas to promote social interaction with larger groups of pupils.

Enrolment of children with special educational needs:

All parents are given an application form to fill in, prior to their child enrolling in the school. On this form parents are asked to give details of all assessments the child may have had. Parents are also given basic information on the school, stressing the importance of parents informing the school of any 'special need' their child may have. The school will use this information to make informed decisions, on how able the school is, to meet the child's needs. If resources are required an application is made to the DES. The BoM will make every effort to ensure adequate resources are in place for the enrolled child, before they are admitted to the school.

If a pupil has an identified special need and is already receiving a service from another organisation, parents are expected to notify the school. If parents withhold information and/or do not notify the school of behaviour needs/special needs/assessments and/or services received by their child, the BoM (having carefully considered the safety of the child and the resources in the school available to meet the child's needs) may delay admitting the enrolled child to the school until they can ensure the safety of the child and other children attending the school. The BoM will act promptly to address the needs of the child, with the intention of admitting/re-accepting the enrolled child as speedily as possible. The BoM may have to apply to the DES for 'home tuition' for the enrolled child until necessary arrangements are in place.

The Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) is contacted at the earliest opportunity so as to apply for SNA assistance/technology etc. for the pupil. In line with the School Enrolment policy, if the resources specified in reports are not available for the child, the BoM may appeal the decision of the SENO. If deemed a health and safety issue, the BoM may decide not to admit the enrolled child into the school environs until it is safe to do so. Each case will be examined individually. Parents will be informed at all times of progress and meetings arranged with them to discuss concerns etc. The class teacher and SEN teacher will read all current reports on the child, prior to receiving the child in school.

Procedures for Provision of Resources for Pupils with SEN:

On recommendation from a specialist, specialised equipment and resources for pupils with SEN may be purchased by school (with permission by the Board of Management) or loaned by an organisation providing a service to the pupil. The SEN teacher will be responsible for the equipment. SEN teachers will share their experience and expertise with class teachers. Class teachers will have access to resources from the SEN team should they wish.

Special education team meetings:

Teachers on the Special Needs team meet outside school hours within time permitted by Haddington Rd. hours, with the Special Needs co-ordinator, to plan, share practice and discuss the learning outcomes of the children on their caseload. Class teachers have regular informal discussions with class teachers with regard to the progress of the children in their care. Time-tabled meetings are arranged, when required. The SEN **team** meets formally, twice yearly (September and February/ March) with individual mainstream teachers during school hours, to discuss the progress of children currently receiving additional support from the SEN team and other children in their classes who they feel are at risk and may benefit from extra support.

The senior management person responsible for coordinating Special Needs will arrange the dates for these meetings and a senior member on the SEN team will record the minutes/outcomes which are recorded on a template as outlined below:

Names of pupils in each class
Dates of birth
Background information
Current practice including learning targets and outcomes
Further suggestions
SEN teacher providing intervention

Individual Educational Programmes (IEPs) and IPLPs are drafted/reviewed/updated following these meetings. Parent-Teacher meetings are held in the first term (November/December) of each school year. Parents of children with special needs are invited to meet with an SEN teacher in September. A template is used for recording information received from this meeting (see attached). However, meetings are arranged to facilitate parents wishing to discuss their children's progress, at any time during the year.

Role of the classroom teacher: (LS guidelines pg. 42)

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class (es), including those selected for supplementary teaching. A particular responsibility of the class teacher is to create a classroom environment in which learning difficulties can be prevented or at least alleviated. This is best achieved by grouping pupils for instruction, providing lower achieving pupils with strategies for reading and problem solving, adapting learning materials for lower-achieving pupils and liaising closely with their parents. Where a pupil is selected to receive supplementary teaching, it is essential that the class teacher should contribute to developing the learning targets and evaluating the learning outcomes in the pupil's Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) and to the planning and implementation of activities designed to attain those targets, with the intention of improving learning outcomes. Where supplementary teaching cannot be provided for a pupil, or is being phased out or discontinued, the class teacher will need to develop and implement a support programme that meets the pupil's changing needs, in consultation with the SEN teachers working with the children in his/her class.

In the Classroom:

Pupils with SEN require an environment which is well organised and predictable and a programme which is presented clearly and with abundant opportunities for success. Pupils with SEN will participate and be facilitated to access all areas of the curriculum. Realistic learning goals and expectations will be adopted in relation to the pupil's overall progress. Adaptations to the curriculum, outcomes, activities, and resource materials will be made through the use of differentiation (see sheet on Differentiation attached).

The teacher will vary the use of strategies to meet the learning needs of the pupils with SEN. Where the pupil is unable to participate in the class curriculum, an individual programme of work will be designed for the pupil in consultation with the SEN teacher. Depending on the level of need an SNA will be assigned to the class at certain periods to assist the class teacher in her work. The teacher and SNA will encourage active participation by the pupil with special needs in the class. There will be a balance between the provision for the pupil's academic and social needs. ICT may be used to further facilitate the pupil's learning. Certain pupils may have a recommendation for an exemption from Irish; however parents must request this exemption and give their consent in writing to the principal. Homework is allocated by the class teacher in consultation with the parents appropriate to the child's ability. The SEN teacher will not set homework for the pupil ???

A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs

Observation	ss	Personnel Involved
<p>Stage 1: Classroom Support Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development</p>	<p>Class teacher informs one of the teachers on the Special Needs team and in consultation with this teacher administers appropriate screening measures. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil's identified needs within the normal classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents and termly with the Special Needs team.</p>	<p><i>Class teacher</i> <i>Parent</i> <i>Special Needs team</i></p> <p><i>Additional Supports Available</i> <i>Principal</i> <i>NEPS Psychologist</i></p>
<p><i>If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may make a decision to move to Stage 2</i></p>		
<p>Stage 2: School support Child is referred to learning support teacher, with parental permission for further diagnostic testing.</p>	<p>If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent, class teacher and learning support teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's learning plan.</p>	<p><i>Class teacher</i> <i>Parent</i> <i>Special Needs team</i></p> <p><i>Additional Supports Available</i> <i>Health Board</i> <i>NEPS Psychologist</i> <i>Other Support Staff and Services available to school</i></p>
<p><i>If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3</i></p>		
<p>Stage 3: School Support Plus School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.</p>	<p>A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to revisions of the learning plan and referral for specialist review as necessary.</p> <p>Any private practitioner engaged by St. Comán's Wood Primary School at Stage 3 will have the relevant Department of Education and Science Circulars and guidance notes drawn to their attention.</p>	<p><i>Class teacher</i> <i>Parent</i> <i>Special Needs team</i> <i>Relevant Specialist</i></p> <p><i>Additional Supports Available</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NEPS Psychologist</i> • <i>Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments</i> • <i>Speech and Language Therapist</i> • <i>Occupational Therapist</i> • <i>Psychiatrist</i> • <i>Paediatrician</i> • <i>Art Therapist etc.</i>

Reading Recovery

Three staff members are trained in the *Reading Recovery* program. Data from the Early Literacy Screening Test used in Junior Infants, YARK used in senior infants, teacher observation, level of need and children's attendance records, are used to inform teachers of those who may benefit from *Reading Recovery* programme.

Procedures for early intervention/ screening/ referral of children with sen:

St. Comán's Wood Primary School promotes a policy of early intervention in order to support children identified as having a need for additional support from the SEN team. Parents will be informed at all stages of any concerns teachers may have. The staged approach is followed.

The staged approach:

The SEN team with the principal, assistant principal assigned responsibility for the co-ordination of Special Needs in the school and relevant teachers adopt a staged approach to intervention (see model of Staged Approach on following page). If concern remains after intervention and additional support from the teacher and SEN team, the school may request a consultation and assessment of the pupil's need from a specialist outside the school. Where this is the case, the parents' permission in writing will be sought to do so. If the parents refuse to give their permission for a pupil to receive extra support, a written record of their decision, signed by parents will be kept in the child's file. Following meetings with staff, should parents continue to refuse to give their consent to have a pupil assessed, the Board of Management may apply to the Circuit Court for an order to have the pupil assessed (Education Welfare Act). Every effort is made in the school to develop strong, high-trust relationships with parents. For this reason an application to the Circuit Court has to date never been required.

Learning support:

In September children below the 12th percentile (2nd to 6th classes) in standardised testing will be identified and their needs addressed in differentiated small groups.

After the October class teachers' meetings with the Special Needs team, children in Junior Infants experiencing difficulties in the early literacy test will be identified including those with Speech and Language difficulties. Identification will be based on the class teachers' and SEN teachers' observations. Parents will be informed (see Appendix A).

Resource teaching:

The SEN teacher in consultation with the parents, class teacher and other professionals working with the child designs an IEP. The IEP will identify specific areas of need for the child and these will be incorporated into his/her scheme of work. The child is timetabled for resource teaching in September in consultation with the class teacher. Resource teaching may be conducted either out of class or in class using a one-to-one model or group model depending on the needs of the child.

Traveller education:

Pupils from the Travelling Community are fully included in mainstream classes. With permission from the parents, pupils from the travelling community receive additional support from the SEN team according to their needs.

Speech and language class: (see Language Class policy)

The maximum number of pupils in the language class is 7. There is an admissions team meeting held in May to discuss and decide candidates for the following year. This is attended by the Senior Speech and Language therapist for the area; the class occupational therapist; the class Speech and language therapist; the class teacher and the principal. Strict criteria are used when making decisions on what children will be enrolled in the Speech and language class, the following year. The Speech and Language therapist visits the school three days a week and the Occupational therapist visits the school one day a week. The OT works with the children in the sensory room and school hall. The Speech and

Language therapist has been assigned an office in the school. Pupils spend on average 1-2 years in the language class before returning to their respective mainstream schools. As noted earlier, Pupils from the *Speech and Language class* are included in mainstream classes for Aistear, physical education, religious instruction and other areas to promote social interaction with larger groups of pupils. For more information, please refer to the separate policy on the Speech and Language class.

Language support for foreign born nationals:

EAL pupils receive support either individually or in a group, depending on the needs of the child. Teachers are aware of the merits of immersion in a language and for this reason support is provided primarily in the classroom. Oral language communication is the primary focus of the teaching, along with reinforcement of the mainstream curriculum. Children with English language difficulties are assessed in February, by the SEN team, using the *Primary School Assessment* kit. Individual scores are used to inform teaching and level of support required.

Many classes choose to have an 'Oral Language' station, supported by the SEN team, during station teaching. Sometimes this station is organised in the classroom and sometimes outside the classroom, depending on the size of the room. EAL children are given particular attention at the 'oral language' station. Careful attention is given by class teachers to developing listening, speaking and oral language skills (see English whole school plan)

Role of the special education needs(SEN) teacher:

The SEN teacher provides additional support for pupils with educational needs. The teacher identifies the pupil's strengths and needs, teaching strategies specific to the learning needs of the pupil, sets targets, and plans a scheme of work to be covered in each of the 3 school terms. This is done in consultation with the class teacher and parents. The SEN teacher supports the class teacher in their work. This may be in the form of 'station teaching' in the classroom, within which the needs of SEN children are identified and catered for, where children learn from each other in both 'ability' and 'mixed-ability' groupings as deemed appropriate by the teachers in consultation with each other.

Role of the special needs assistant(SNA):

The SNA's work is under the direction and supervision of the class teachers, in order to help promote effective learning and teaching. Their role is as follows:

- To contribute to the effective organisation and use of resources
- To contribute to the quality of care and welfare of pupils
- To support the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum
- To support the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom

Depending on the level of need in a classroom, an SNA will be assigned to a class at certain periods to assist the class teacher in his/her efforts to meet the needs of the children (for example when a child who has access to an SNA is with the resource teacher).

Individual educational plans and group educational plans

Individual Educational Plans:

An IEP will be designed specifically for each pupil who has been allocated resource hours under the low incidence model of allocation. The IEP will reflect what is different and unique about the pupil. It will be linked to the curriculum and focus on clear relevant targets. The SEN teachers will use a template as follows. The IEP will be designed in consultation and collaboration with the class teacher, parents, and other professionals working with the child. Personnel from the Brothers of Charity/CAMHS/ Child Guidance/ HSE will be consulted when appropriate. In June SEN teachers review IEPs highlighting targets to be carried forward the following year.

Page 1:

Name of child

Date of birth

Address

School, Class & Class Teacher

People involved in constructing the IEP

Contact information,

Additional information and concerns

Commencement date/Review date

Page 2:

Summary of available information (formal/informal)

Strengths

Needs

2-3 Priority Learning Needs (long term learning goals)

Learning needs carried forward from last year.

Page 3 & Subsequent pages:

Learning targets related to the priority learning need

Target date/Date achieved

Learning outcomes

Teaching strategies

Materials/Resources

Other staff involved in implementing IEP targets

Home activities

Timetable

Group Educational Plans:

The SEN teachers for children who have been selected for learning support, language support or additional support will design group Educational Plans. A template will be used consisting of:

Names of children

Class & Class Teacher

Learning Period

Priority Learning Needs

Learning Targets

Learning outcomes

Learning Support Activities and Strategies

Materials

Record keeping:

Only two copies of each child's psychological, speech and language, occupational or other assessments are kept: one in the child's file in the special need coordinator's

filing cabinet and one in the child's file in the classroom. The assessments and reports are stored in the school for a period of 11 years from once the child leaves the school.

Approaches to involving parents and outside agencies

Parents are invited to meet the SEN teacher in September/October to discuss the needs of the pupil with Special Needs and the nature and content of the intervention. Parents are free at any time to make an appointment with the class teacher, SEN teacher or principal to discuss any concerns they may have. Parent/teacher meetings are held in November/December of each year. As regards other personnel, the SEN teacher will make arrangements to meet the specialist involved to obtain and share information regarding the pupil, which may aid the SEN teacher when planning the schemes of work. Outside personnel (occupational therapist, physiotherapist) may visit the school on a regular basis to provide

intervention to a particular child. The SEN teacher will liaise with these personnel on a regular basis and may attend the session.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

External agencies that support practice in the school and advise staff include the Brothers of Charity, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), HSE, NEPs, NEWB, PDST, SESS (Special Education Support Service), the Gardaí the local play group directors and the Children and Young Peoples Services committees (CYPSC).

Brothers of Charity: When a child is transferring from the Brothers of Charity to Junior Infants, the Brothers of Charity arrange a meeting with all personnel working with the child. The principal Úna Feeley attends this meeting. Ms. Feeley also visits the Brothers of Charity to observe the child learning as they interact with staff in the Brothers of Charity. This helps the principal in advising the BoM as to the needs of the child and what the BoM need to do to meet the child's needs. The SNA assigned to the child observes staff in the Brothers of Charity, working with the child prior to the child transferring to Junior Infants. Support from the Brothers of Charity continues for two years after the child transfers.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service: Dr. Philip Tyndall (Psychiatrist) leads this team. Included on the team are Speech and Language therapists and Occupational therapists. When there are concerns about a child's behavioural needs (including select mutism) and/or a query of ADD, ADHD, and/or emotional behavioural disorder, the principal and the Special Needs co-ordinator advise parents to seek a referral to CAMHS via the child's GP. The CAMHS team may seek advice from the principal/class teachers and/or special needs team when deciding whether or not to accept a child, referred to them. If the child is put on CAMHS caseload a request may be made to observe the child in the class/school setting. This is always facilitated, with parents permission.

National Educational Psychological Service: NEPS provides support and advice to the school through the educational psychologist appointed by NEPS to the school. This support is provided mainly by phone and/or email. When children are at stage 3 (see below) the principal seeks advice and support from the NEPS psychologist. This advice may be sought at an earlier stage. Sometimes, it is deemed appropriate for a child to have a psychological assessment. The psychologist timetables the pupil for assessment. On the day of the assessment the psychologist discusses the preliminary findings with the child's parents and a member of the Special Needs team. When the assessment is completed the parents, principal and teacher are informed of the results. If the child has a special need under the low incidence category, the Special Needs co-ordinator will apply to the SENO for resource teaching hours with parents' consent. In the case of a referral for a speech and language or occupational assessment, the SEN teacher who takes the child for additional support will obtain permission from the parents and refer the child to the appropriate service in writing.

HSE: The public health nurses support staff in identifying the needs of the children. Early intervention is key here with teachers and public health nurses working together to identify concerns with regard to hearing, sight, motor skills etc. The public health nurse visits the school regularly and the team do thorough checks on infants early in the school year. A room is provided for HSE staff in the school. When there is a concern, the public health nurse refers the child for further investigation to the HSE.

In October 2013 the Occupational therapy section of the HSE funded training for teachers on how to implement OT programmes under the supervision of an Occupational Therapist.

The principal made a request to the HSE that she would be informed when parents do not attend appointments. The principal shares this information with the class teacher and the class teacher and/or principal contacts the parents and encourages them to attend.

Child Protection Conferences: The principal as the designated liaison person (DLP) for child protection attends conferences on individual children when invited to do so by the HSE. The principal may ask a senior member of staff to attend a case conference on her behalf. The principal receives a report from the class teacher on the child concerned and shares relevant information with the HSE. The HSE sends the principal a copy of the team plan of intervention and actions agreed by the different agencies supporting the child. The principal shares relevant information with the class teacher. The principal reports to the BoM the number of conferences attended since the previous meetings, number of phone calls she has made seeking advice from the HSE with regard to child protection issues and the number of new child protection cases opened and closed. The deputy principal has been appointed as the deputy DLP and acts on behalf of the principal in her absence.

National Education Welfare Board: Olivia Ward (Assistant Principal) liaises with the National Education Welfare officer monthly and reports to her, on school attendance. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school regularly. Attendance is tracked in the school, using a data management system – Databiz Solutions. When children miss 15 days or more, parents are asked to meet with the principal and give reasons as to why their child is not attending school. If a child misses 21 days or more parents are invited to attend a meeting with the Education Welfare officer, principal and assistant principal. If parents fail to attend this meeting the Education Welfare officer calls to the home and reports back to the school. A court order has been issued on some parents for non-attendance at school. However, it is noted that attendance has improved in the school over recent years.

SESS: The Special Education Support Service provided funding for the professional development of teachers. For example in January 2015 the SESS funded a four hour course for twelve teachers on staff to learn *Irish Sign Language* so that they could communicate with a child in the school who had profound hearing impairment.

Gárda Síochána: The Gárda Síochána support the work of the school helping to nurture good relationships with families in the school, in a wide range of areas: regular visits to classrooms, car park safety, school security, child protection, families with refugee status, a friendly presence on Family Fun Day, assisting on our annual Sports Day etc.

Local pre-schools: In May of every year the principal meets with the directors of the six pre-schools in the town. At this meeting information is shared in order to ease the transition of preschoolers into Junior Infants. The directors advise the principal on how the school can best meet the needs of the children including those with special needs. If deemed helpful the SNA assigned to a child, due to start school the following September will visit the pre-school to observe the child and get advice from pre-school staff.

CYPSC: The principal is the county representative on the Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC). CYPSCs are the key structure identified by the Government to plan and coordinate services for children and young people in every county in Ireland. The purpose of the CYPSC is to promote, support and deliver national and local interagency working across services that work with and for children and young people in Ireland. With representatives from all the aforementioned agencies, the principal has found these meetings a wonderful opportunity to share knowledge and experiences

Approaches to timetabling:

The SEN team liaise with the class teachers in June to draw up a timetable for provision of resource, learning support, language teaching. The following September some minor adjustments may/may not be made.

Work Schedule of the SEN teachers:

The caseload for additional resource, learning support, and language support will be divided and decided on by the SEN team following analysis of test results in June and may be revised early September.

Health and Safety:

All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. Depending on the severity of need all staff members will be informed and alerted to possible hazards. To ensure the safety of pupils with SEN on the schoolyard, the Special Needs Assistants are present for the duration of yards breaks along with the teachers on duty. Should a pupil with acute safety needs enrol in the school, the health and safety policy will be reviewed for that pupil.

Administration of medicine: (refer to Administration of Medicine school policy)

St. Comán's Wood Primary School does not administer **un**prescribed medicine to pupils within the school. Parents may administer medicine to their child on the school grounds if it is necessary. Medical information is recorded on the enrolment form. **PRESCRIBED MEDICATION MAY BE ADMINISTERED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES (SEE POLICY)**

Code of Behaviour: (see the policy)

In general pupils with SEN will follow the code of behaviour throughout the school. In extenuating circumstances where a pupil has a behavioural disorder, an individual behaviour management plan will be drawn up by the principal, class teacher, SEN teacher, SNA, parents and if deemed necessary advice will be sought from outside expertise working with the child. The team when implementing the personal behaviour plan may devise personal rewards and sanctions.

Transfer to post-primary:

Information on all children in 6th class is transferred to the relevant post-primary school using the DES transfer form. It is also the duty of the parents of the pupil(s) with SEN to inform the post-primary school of their child's needs.

DIFFERENTIATION

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer” (Henry David Thoreau)

Definition

The term differentiation is used to describe the various strategies teachers use to enable groups of students with diverse learning characteristics to participate in the mainstream programme.

(Westwood, 2003, P.202)

...teaching things differently according to observed differences among learners

(Westwood, 2003, P.202)

The term 'differentiation' refers to the method whereby the teacher varies content, activities, methodology and resources when taking into account the range of interests, needs and experience of the students. It is a process that allows for variation in pace, amount, content, level and method of curriculum presentation to ensure that learning experiences are appropriate for all students. It is particularly important in meeting the challenges of those with special educational needs. *(NCAA 2002, Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Mild General Learning disabilities, P.20)*

Planning Differentiation

- Select the topic to be taught
- Identify the specific content to be included
- Identify learning goals and objectives for the majority of students in the class
- Decide on the way the lesson will be organised and conducted for most students
- Identify students who will need modifications to the general lesson format
- Prepare any necessary adaptations
- Teaching the lesson, and making any necessary additional changes while teaching
- Providing extra assistance to certain students while the lesson is in progress
- Planning appropriate methods for assessing students' learning, based on the goals and objectives.

When planning the differentiated objectives, it is usually helpful to have in mind the following three sentence starters:

- All students will...
- Some students will...
- A few students might...

This helps teachers to identify the essential core of knowledge *all* students will master through differentiated activities.

Some students will achieve more than this

A few may carry out extended activities to increase learning

Modification of Curriculum Content

- Students with learning difficulties are required to cover less material
- The tasks or activities they complete may be easier to accomplish
- More able students may cover more material and in greater depth
- The nature of learning tasks set for students will be matched to their learning rate and abilities
- Differentiated content for homework can be used as one way of meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities

Differentiation by resource

- Simplify language when necessary
- Provide illustrations or diagrams
- Remove unnecessary detail
- Use cues or prompts where responses are required from students

Adapting Instruction

As a result of differentiation, there will be changes in both teaching and learning policies. Some of the following strategies may be used:

- The teacher may give more or less assistance to individual students, depending on their needs
- The teacher may reteach some concepts to some students using simpler language and more examples
- Questions asked during the lesson may be pitched at different levels of difficulty for different pupils
- Closer monitoring of the work of some pupils may take place throughout the lesson
- The teacher may use particular tactics to gain and maintain the interest of poorly motivated pupils
- Feedback may be given in more or less detail, according to the students' needs

- The rate at which the students are expected to work may be varied, with extra time allowed for some students to complete tasks
- Extension and independent work may be set for more able students

POLICY FOR THE PROVISION OF TRAVELLER EDUCATION

Diversity and difference characterises the society in which children live. A respect for and appreciation of human and cultural diversity is promoted and celebrated in St. Comán's Wood Primary School. The mission statement of the school states that "*Each child through positive learning experiences will be stimulated to achieve his/her full potential, face life confidently, find fulfilment and be respectful in an ever-changing world*". The education of traveller pupils in the school sets out to fulfil the ideals presented in the above statement.

Aims of Traveller Education:

1. The traveller pupil will add to the existing diversity of the school, contribute to the learning experiences of all pupils, and leave the school proud of his/her own cultural identity
2. To provide an opportunity for pupils from varying backgrounds to develop their full potential in an atmosphere conducive to their needs, where they will feel accepted, encouraged, respected and supported.

Promoting the culture of the Travelling Community:

St. Comán's Wood Primary School endeavours to acknowledge and celebrate the culture of the Travelling community throughout the school in the following ways:

- Displaying posters and artwork in the corridors and classrooms that reflect the diversity of the school population
- Ensuring that textbooks and material are free of bias and using materials and books that reflect Traveller culture
- Providing opportunities for collaborative learning through teaching methodologies
- Implementing a curriculum that is child-centred and relevant to the different groups in the school
- Fostering the principles of justice, equality and freedom of expression in all everyday dealings
- Inviting parents from the travelling community to come into the school and share their knowledge of the traveller culture with the children.

Traveller identify and the culturally affirmative school:

Traveller culture and lifestyle is acknowledged in the school in the following ways:

- The school plan has a positive and active policy on the promotion of an inclusive intercultural ethos, including a strong anti-racist and anti-bullying strategy
- Parents are welcomed into the school at all times
- St. Comán's Wood Primary School supports the involvement of parents in all aspects of their child's school life
- The Traveller pupil is involved in all activities, listened to and valued, and has a sense of belonging in the school
- The personal experiences of the pupil are used as a basis on which to develop new learning experiences

In the Classroom:

- Pupils from the Travelling Community are fully included in mainstream classes.
- Traveller pupils are placed in age-appropriate classes.
- Traveller pupils participate in all aspects of the Revised Primary School Curriculum.
- With parental consent, pupils from the travelling community receive additional support from the SEN team according to their needs.

Transfer between schools:

- When a pupil transfers to St. Comán's Wood Primary School from another school, St. Comán's Wood Primary School will contact the previous school to inform them of the pupil's enrolment.
- If a pupil leaves St. Comán's Wood Primary School to go to another school; the pupil will be marked absent on the roll, until such time as the school is notified that the pupil is enrolled in another school.
- When a pupil transfers to post-primary education, with parental consent copies of assessments/reports will be forwarded to the relevant primary/ post-primary school.

Assessment:

See policy on Assessment and policy for pupils with SEN

Priorities for the Education of Traveller Pupils

Attendance:

As highlighted in the *Survey of Traveller Education Provision*, poor attendance of traveller pupils in Irish primary schools was recorded. It will be a priority of the school to improve the attendance of traveller pupils. Parents need to realise that there will be follow-up from the school in instances of absenteeism. Parents will be encouraged to make greater efforts to ensure their children are attending regularly. Regular attendance by pupils will be rewarded and the pupils will act as role models for other traveller pupils in the school. Traveller parents need to be convinced of the value of education. Involving parents in school life, communicating, and keeping in regular contact with them is essential also to help convince them of the value of school.

Literacy Levels:

As a result of poor attendance, some traveller pupils show poor levels of literacy. Pupils showing difficulties are monitored and their needs are met through a staged approach (see *Staged Approach Model* above). Impediments to traveller pupils' progress in literacy include poor attendance and lack of parental interest in education. Therefore, educating parents about the importance of literacy and the provision of storybooks in the home from a young age is important. Parents need to support their children and encourage literacy where possible. Children from the travelling community posing with reading difficulties receive additional support from the SEN team according to their needs.

Integration and Intercultural Education:

Children from the travelling community are fully integrated into mainstream classes in the school. It is the aim of the school to provide greater integration of the travelling and settled communities through display of positive images of traveller culture throughout the school. Resources such as photographs, books (on Ceannt the traveller language etc.) and pictures can be used to educate children more about the travelling community and their culture e.g. DVDs- 'Into the West', 'Packeen Lackeen ' etc. Musicians - Shane Ward, Chris Doran etc. It is our view that children in the school should "*develop a respect for cultural difference and an understanding of the social dimensions of life*" as outlined in the

guidelines for *Intercultural Education in the Primary School*. All children have a culture and learning the value of their culture is central to their self-esteem and their sense of identity.

After School Activities:

Children from the travelling community are encouraged to attend after school activities i.e homework club, sport and activities. Some do attend. The school subsidises the costs when necessary.

RATIFICATION:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Comán's Wood Primary School on

It will be reviewed annually.

Signed:

Chairperson

Principal

Letter of Consent for Additional Support in St. Comán's Wood Primary School, Roscommon

Dear Parent,

St. Comán's Wood Primary School maintains a strong focus on the belief that early intervention is crucial for children's educational development. We value the strong links between home and school and the importance of good communication at all times during your child's education.

Your child has been identified as someone who would benefit from additional support teaching. This takes place in class through station teaching and occasionally through small group or individual withdrawal when necessary.

Please sign below and return to the school as soon as possible.

My child _____ has my support and permission to receive learning support as deemed necessary in St. Comán's Wood Primary School.

Signed _____.

Date|_____

OR

I/We have discussed _____ progress and educational needs with the class teacher and teacher for special educational needs and **do not give** consent for him/her to receive additional support from the special education teacher.

Signed _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Signed _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Date _____