

# Holy Family Senior School Ennis, Co. Clare.



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## Introduction

Holy Family Senior School is a co-educational mainstream primary school catering for children from mixed social and cultural backgrounds. The Board of Management, parents and staff of Holy Family Senior School are committed to the creation of an inclusive, supportive learning environment for all pupils. Holy Family Senior School enrolls pupils from second to sixth class in a mainstream setting. There are also two special classes, one SLD -Dyslexia class catering for children who have identified reading difficulties and one Autism Class. The school uses a variety of strategies to ensure inclusive practices are adhered to. These are dependent on the needs of the individual child and include SPHE lessons, PE lessons, The Arts, group and paired work and buddy systems. Where children are accessing special classes, we ensure that they are integrated into a mainstream class for as many subjects and whole class events as possible. Our school aims to accommodate the needs of every child and enable all students to participate meaningfully in an inclusive educational setting.

## Rationale

At Holy Family Senior School, we are dedicated to providing an inclusive, supportive learning environment where all children can thrive. By using our special education teaching resources appropriately and effectively, we support each child's individual needs while fostering a sense of belonging, participation, and equality within our school community. It is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and students on the provision of effective learning support for pupils with additional learning needs. The provision of support for children with special educational needs is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners involved. It is important that all partners, children, parents and teachers contribute to the planning and implementation of our school plan on Special Educational Needs.

The policy has been updated in line with SET Guidelines published in December 2024; *Guidelines for Primary Schools Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes*

## Vision and Mission Statement

This plan is underpinned by the vision of our Founder Catherine McAuley that education should be

-  Child centred
-  Holistic
-  Aspiring to allow each child to fulfil their true potential regardless of disadvantage or marginalisation
-  Supported by a Catholic ethos

The spirit of the school provides pupils, parents, teachers and special needs assistants with opportunities to experience and appreciate our diverse society in all aspects of school life. We belong to an educational community that is inclusive of all.

## Aims

At Holy Family Senior School, we are committed to inclusive education by ensuring all children are meaningfully included in mixed-ability classes. This approach sets high expectations and allows children with special educational needs to learn alongside their peers, benefiting everyone socially and academically. The updated guidelines, aligned with Circular 002/2024 *The Special Education Teacher (SET) allocation*

*model* supports how we use our special education teaching resources to include all pupils fully in school life and learning.

- Have specific needs identified at the earliest opportunity
- Are taught in an environment which is conducive to learning, and which allows them to develop and learn at an individual pace.
- To promote positive attitudes to inclusive education
- Through inclusive practices, develop an appreciation of their own worth and respect for the diversity of others
- Enabled to develop friendships with peers in the classroom and wider school and community environment
- To develop self-esteem and positive attitudes about school and learning in these pupils.
- To provide supplementary teaching and additional support and resources for these pupils in Literacy and Numeracy and for those experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- To involve parents in supporting their children's learning through collaboration and parent-support programmes.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- Facilitating a shared sense of responsibility for SEN pupils within the school, through supplementary and team teaching
- Providing information on professional development and training in SEN education
- Sharing expertise and responsibilities on differentiation of the curriculum

## **Universal Design for Learning and Inclusive Practice**

Holy Family Senior School uses a variety of strategies to ensure inclusive practices are used throughout the school. Where children are accessing special classes, we ensure that they are integrated into a mainstream class for subjects such as P.E., art, music and the sacraments where relevant. Our School aims to be a place where all children, to the greatest extent possible, can participate, achieve and be supported in a mainstream education setting. We embrace the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which is an educational framework that acknowledges and embraces the diverse strengths, needs, and learning styles of all students. It operates on the principle that "what is essential for some may be beneficial for all," aiming to create inclusive environments where every learner can access, engage with, and succeed in their education.

Guiding principles of UDL in our school are:

Multiple Means of Engagement: Addressing the "why" of learning by providing various ways to motivate and involve students.

Multiple Means of Representation: Focusing on the "what" of learning by presenting information in diverse formats to cater to different learning preferences.

Multiple Means of Action and Expression: Concerning the "how" of learning by offering students multiple ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Courses.ie

UDL emphasizes that barriers to learning often reside in the environment rather than the student. We try to identify and remove these obstacles to facilitate better learning outcomes.

By implementing UDL principles, we aim to foster learner agency, enabling students to become purposeful, resourceful and strategic in their learning. This approach not only enhances academic outcomes but also supports positive behavior and emotional well-being, creating a supportive and proactive classroom environment.

Incorporating UDL into our school's Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy ensures that all students are provided with equitable opportunities to learn, reflecting our commitment to inclusive education

## **Identification of pupils with additional educational needs through the Continuum of Support Process**

### **Enrolment of children with identified special education needs**

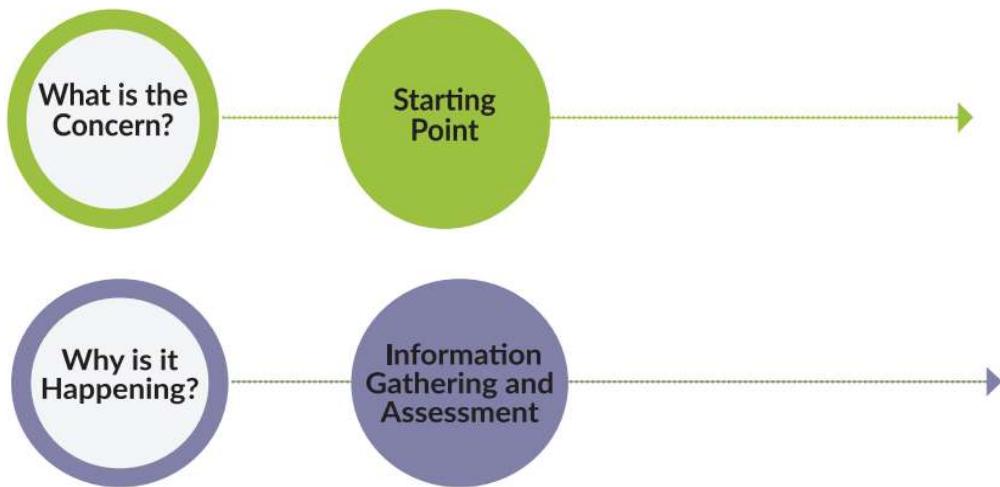
Children with Special Educational Needs apply to the school through the normal channels and their application will be subject to the eligibility criteria cited in the school's Admissions Policy.

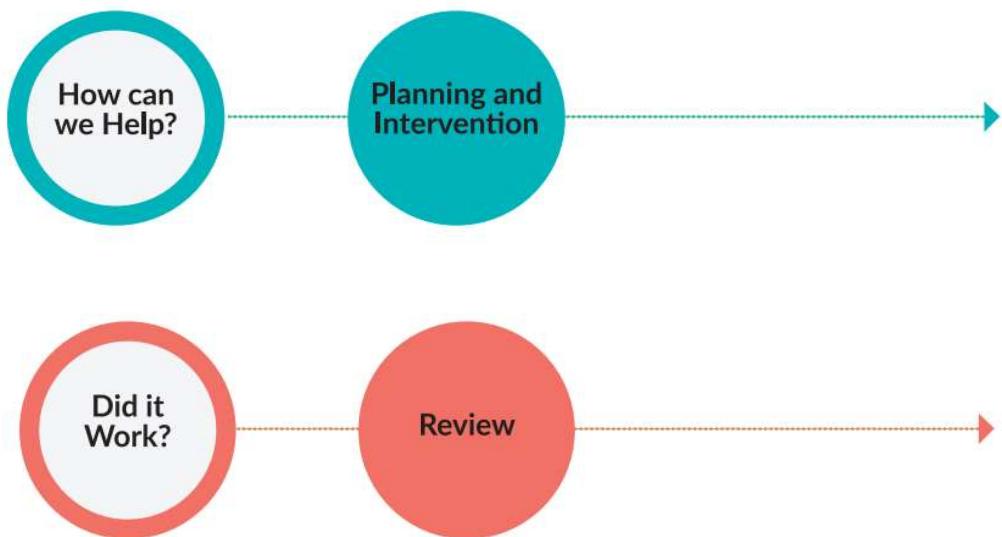
Once the child has been offered a place, the Principal and SENCO will endeavour to ensure the child receives the appropriate support and resources.

The school will ensure that a transition programme is put in place to enable the child to move to the new environment as easily as possible. The child and parents will have a named member of the team who will meet with them prior to admission, discuss their needs and ensure they are comfortable with the processes and procedures in the school. This person shall be available to the parents as a contact point during the transition process.

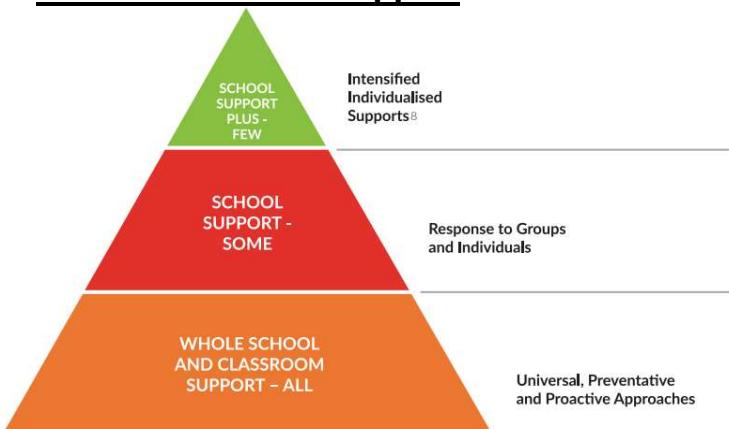
### **Organization of Special Education Provision**

Where it is agreed that a child's needs warrant more targeted intervention and support, at the level of School Support/ School Support Plus, then this is recorded in a Student Support File. The four step problem solving process guides identification, planning and review of support at this level of the Continuum of Support.





### The Continuum of Support



### **Support Framework**

At Holy Family Senior School, we support all children through a whole-school approach that includes inclusive, proactive teaching in every classroom.

- **Classroom Support (All):** The class teacher provides extra help for children with emerging needs who haven't responded to general supports. These students don't yet need targeted interventions but benefit from tailored classroom strategies.
- **School Support (Some):** Children needing more help receive targeted small-group or one-to-one support from the special education teacher, in partnership with the class teacher.
- **School Support Plus (Few):** For children with more complex and ongoing needs, we offer intensive, individualised support led by the special education teacher, ensuring they can engage fully in school life.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process</h2>	
<b>Classroom Support</b>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the curriculum to 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.</p> <p>This is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parental consultation</li> <li>■ Teacher observation records</li> <li>■ Pupil consultation</li> <li>■ Teacher-designed measures /assessments</li> <li>■ Basic needs checklist</li> <li>■ Learning environment checklist</li> <li>■ My Thoughts About School Checklist</li> <li>■ Literacy and numeracy tests</li> <li>■ Screening tests of language skills</li> <li>■ SMART targets will be set to meet the child's needs; (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-limited)</li> <li>■ Following an agreed period of time, a collaborative review of the child's response to intervention takes place.</li> <li>■ Based on the outcome of this review, a decision is made whether to continue with or amend targets.</li> <li>■ Based on the child's response to intervention, a collaborative decision is made whether to continue to allocate support at the identified level of the Continuum of Support</li> <li>■ All students are provided with a letter that briefly outlines the various models of Special Education support that exist in Holy Family Senior School: Appendix 1 Overview of Special Education Teaching (SET) Provision Based on Identified Need</li> </ul> <p>A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period and is subject to review.</p>
<b>School Support</b>	<p>At this level, a Support Plan is developed to meet the specific needs of the pupil. It is informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher observation records</li> <li>■ Teacher-designed assessments and measures</li> <li>■ Learning environment checklist</li> <li>■ Diagnostic assessments in literacy and numeracy</li> <li>■ Functional Assessments, behaviour checklists, ABC charts and frequency counts will be used to highlight children who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties in the school.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supports provided to children are evidence informed and targeted, based on identified strengths and needs.</li> <li>■ SMART targets will be set to meet the child's needs; (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-limited)</li> <li>■ Following an agreed period, a collaborative review of the child's response to intervention takes place.</li> <li>■ Based on the outcome of this review, a decision is made whether to continue with or amend targets.</li> <li>■ Based on the child's response to intervention, a collaborative decision is made whether to continue to allocate support at the identified level of the Continuum of Support</li> <li>■ Parent and pupil consultation and review:</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">Appendix 2: Information gathering form for parents/guardians regarding Strengths and Needs</p> <p>The Support Plan may include tailored teaching strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Team-teaching</li> <li>■ Small group instruction</li> <li>■ One-to-one support</li> </ul>
<b>School Support Plus</b>	<p>At this stage of support, a comprehensive and structured approach is taken to gather and assess relevant information. A wide range of both formal and informal tools is used, and input from external professionals may be included where appropriate. The assessment process may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Observations by teachers and use of school-based assessments</li> <li>■ Interviews with parents/guardians and the student</li> <li>■ Consultation and review with parents in September, February and June</li> <li>■ Functional assessments to understand specific learning needs</li> <li>■ Standardised testing to assess areas such as cognitive ability, emotional and behavioural development, and adaptive functioning</li> <li>■ Diagnostic testing in area of individual needs</li> <li>■ Supports provided to children are evidence informed and targeted, based on identified strengths and needs.</li> <li>■ Behaviour checklists and ABC charts and frequency counts will be used to highlight children who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties in the school.</li> <li>■ SMART targets will be set to meet the child's needs; (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-limited)</li> <li>■ Following an agreed period of time, a collaborative review of the child's response to intervention takes place.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Based on the outcome of this review, a decision is made whether to continue with or amend targets.</li> <li>■ Based on the child's response to intervention, a collaborative decision is made whether to continue to allocate support at the identified level of the Continuum of Support</li> </ul> <p>The information gathered is used to design an appropriate and individualised support plan. This plan also serves as a baseline for measuring future progress. Interventions at this level are likely to be more detailed and tailored to the student's needs and may include longer-term planning and regular consultation with all stakeholders.</p>
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## Effective Whole-School Approaches/Prevention Strategies

- SET model of support letter shared with all parents in September:
- A print-rich school environment.
- A language rich environment
- EAL monthly themes with listed vocabulary at each level
- In class support for teaching of literacy 4 times weekly. A whole school literacy plan is shared each term with a staged approach to oral language, guided reading, spellings and writing genre
- Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading/Drop Everything and Read after break
- Whole School Library that is fully differentiated with Star tests taken twice yearly and Accelerated Reader quizzes are encouraged and celebrated at a whole school level
- Consistent language in Maths throughout all classes
- In class support and withdrawal for the teaching of Maths with a language rich, hands on, investigative approach
- Biannual book fair.
- Games that promote literacy and numeracy are used within the school.
- Use of ICT to support literacy and numeracy.
- Well-Being Programmes taught throughout the school

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Management, together with the School Principal, ensure that special education teaching resources are deployed for their intended purpose of providing additional support to children with special educational needs, as recorded in the Schedule of Deployment of Special Education Teachers for Children with Special Educational Needs. The Board of Management, the Principal and the school acknowledges that special education teaching allocation is a ringfenced resource for the sole purpose of providing additional and targeted supports to children with identified and recorded special educational needs.

Appendix 3: Form for Principal's Confirmation to BOM- Correct Deployment of SET Resources

The deployment of special education teaching supports is recorded and monitored by the school management and overseen by the Board and School Management. The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Educational Needs:

**SENCO:** Antoinette Loftus (Deputy Principal)

**SET Allocation:** 10 teachers, 1 EAL+ 5-hour cluster + 10 hours SET Ukrainians + 10 hours additional EAL

**SNA Allocation:** 6.5 mainstream + 2 in Autism class + 0.5 Ukrainian SNA (reviewed per term).

The key premise of the special education teaching allocation in our school is that resources are deployed to support children's special educational needs. Those with the greatest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support. Teachers engage in Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) to build capacity and to develop their own competencies in the identification, implementation and monitoring of evidence informed approaches.

## Planning and Time Allocation

### Provision of Special Education Teaching

- The provision of special education teaching is designed to complement and enhance the instruction provided within mainstream classrooms. This additional support aims to address the diverse learning needs of students, ensuring equitable access to the curriculum and promoting academic success for all learners. The support teacher and class teachers co-operate in drawing up timetables and will collaborate and review and change them regularly as needs arise. Where a child has an exemption from Irish, the teachers, where practicable, will endeavor to timetable around this.
- The school year is divided into two instructional terms for the provision of learning support, September – February and February to June. Reviews of support files will take place in February and June and will be noted on the child's support file. School Support Plans are the result of collaboration and partnership between parents/guardians, pupils, class teachers, SNAs and other relevant professionals. The first school support meeting will be held at the beginning of term one. The meeting may be held inside or outside of the school day depending on the parties involved and the level of supervision available to release the class teacher. It will be reviewed at the end of each instructional term (twice yearly, February and June) and new targets will be added as necessary. These profiles and learning programmes will be created and stored electronically in Aladdin. They will be password protected to ensure confidentiality. Support teachers will keep a hard copy of these profiles in a locked cabinet in their rooms; they will share the learning targets with teachers and parents.

The following priorities are considered in the arrangement of supplementary teaching by the support team.

- Primary consideration is given to pupils from 2nd to 6th class who score at or below the 12th percentile in standardized assessments of literacy and/or numeracy. These students are identified as requiring substantial support to address their specific learning needs.
- Subject to the availability of resources, pupils from 2nd to 6th class who score between the 13th and 20th percentiles in standardized assessments of literacy and/or numeracy may also receive supplementary teaching support
- Pupils who experience emotional, social, or environmental challenges that adversely affect their educational engagement and performance are considered for additional support. This includes students facing issues such as anxiety, behavioural difficulties, or challenging home environments.
- The allocation of supplementary teaching support is guided by the Continuum of Support framework, ensuring that interventions are tailored to the individual needs of each pupil. Regular reviews are conducted to monitor progress and adjust support as necessary

## **Scheduling of In-Class Support**

- In-class support for literacy and numeracy will, where feasible, be scheduled between 10:00 a.m. and lunchtime. This timing aligns with the school's core teaching hours, ensuring children receive differentiated support in the core subjects without class withdrawal and are benefitting from peer learning.

## **Withdrawal from the Classroom**

- When it becomes necessary to withdraw a student from the mainstream classroom for specialized instruction, such sessions will typically be arranged at the beginning or end of the school day. This scheduling strategy is intended to minimize disruption to the student's participation in whole-class learning activities and to uphold the principles of inclusive education by maintaining the student's connection to the broader classroom community.

## **Preservation of Holistic Educational Experiences**

- The school is committed to ensuring that students receiving additional special education teaching do not miss classes that contribute significantly to their holistic development and personal interests. All efforts will be made to avoid scheduling specialized instruction during subjects such as Art, Physical Education (P.E.), Drama, and Music, recognizing the vital role these disciplines play in fostering creativity, physical well-being, self-expression, and social skills.

## **English as An Additional Language**

- Holy Family Senior School acknowledges the right of children to communicate and socialise in the language of their home. The school respects the variety and diversity of the languages that the children bring to school. The primary school curriculum is mostly delivered through the medium of English. The school believes it is desirable for all children to have a standard of English competency comparable to that of a child for whom English is their first language. For this reason, the aim of our EAL provision is to assist in bridging any gap in fluency of English between children for whom English is their first language and those children for whom English is simply one of the languages they use to communicate.
- The Up and Away programme and Primary School Assessment Kit will be used to assess the development of the pupils' abilities in listening, speaking, reading and writing during the year. Children with limited or no English proficiency will be withdrawn to receive EAL support in a small-group setting. Other groups who have not achieved level B1 proficiency will be targeted through in-class support, where possible.
- The aim of the school's EAL programme is the development of oral, reading and writing English language competency for identified children, to a standard that is comparable to that of children for whom English is their sole language of communication and in keeping with the capability of the child.
- In addition to this primary aim, the school also aims to facilitate the child in English language competence to assist in his/her integration into the life of the school and the English language community of his/her locality. It is also expected to develop the child's sense of self-esteem and to encourage creativity in the child.

- The EAL teacher will work with the class teacher when planning the work to be covered and to provide additional support on specific curricular areas where needed.

Pupils who are eligible for supplementary support are identified by the Department of Education and Youth guidelines (circular 0011/2024) and through use of the appropriate assessment procedures. (The Primary Assessment Kit)

- The special education teacher will withdraw children in small groups based on the pupils' competency in the English language.
- Where the pupil qualifies for an exemption for Irish as per circular 0054/2022 the school will enable the parents to seek this.
- Every effort will be made to support the pupil and parents in settling into the school, with assistance from the HSCL teacher where necessary. Translator apps will be used with both parents and pupils to help ease their transition into the school community and classroom settings.
- Where available, other parents or pupils may act as translators or interpreters for the pupils and their family initially. If necessary, the B.O.M. will provide funding for translation of important school correspondence. (See EAL Policy)

## Referral Process to External Agencies

The school is committed to supporting students with additional needs by collaborating with external agencies when necessary. This process is guided by the principles of early identification, parental and student involvement, and adherence to national guidelines. In collaboration with the class teacher, the pupil, the pupil's parents/guardians, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), and the Principal, the SET teacher will lead the referral process to external services such as Primary Care, the General Practitioner (GP), the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the Clare Disability Network Team, the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), or other relevant external agencies, as appropriate to the needs of the pupil.

## Identification and Initial Consultation

- **Collaborative Assessment:** When a student shows signs of requiring additional support beyond the school's capacity, the class teacher, Special Education Teacher (SET), Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), and class teacher collaborate to discuss next steps.
- **Parental Involvement:** Parents/guardians are engaged in discussions to share observations and insights about the student's needs. Their consent is sought before proceeding with any referrals.
- **Student Voice:** In line with the school's commitment to inclusive education, the student's perspectives and experiences are actively sought and considered during the referral process.

## Prioritization for NEPS Referrals

- **Annual Review:** Each year, the Principal and SENCO, in consultation with the support team, compile a priority list of students for referral to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). This list is based on observed needs and the potential benefit from psychological assessment.

## **Completion of Referral Documentation**

- **Form Preparation:** The SET, in collaboration with parents/guardians, completes the necessary referral forms from Primary Care, ensuring all important information is accurately recorded.
- **Submission:** Completed forms are submitted to the appropriate external agency, following their specific referral procedures.
- **Follow Up:** The SET teacher will act as a support between external agencies and families to ensure parents/guardians are aware of dates of appointments. With parental consent they will liaise with outside professionals to facilitate observations, assessments and meetings. Recommendations made by outside professionals will be included in the child's school support file. These targets are reviewed regularly to monitor progress and adjust interventions as necessary.

## **Alternative Assessment Options**

- **Private Assessments:** If waiting times for assessments through public services are extensive, parents may opt for private assessments. The school supports this decision and will integrate recommendations from private assessments into the student's support plan.

## **Integration of External Assessments**

- **Information Sharing:** When a student enrolls with existing assessments, the principal and assigned support teacher meet with the parents/guardians—and, if possible, with relevant external professionals—to discuss the student's strengths and areas of need.
- **Support Plan Development:** Recommendations from assessments are incorporated into the student's support plan, with specific, measurable targets established. These plans are reviewed regularly to monitor progress and adjust interventions as necessary.

## **Organisation of Supplementary Teaching**

### **Models and approaches to supplementary teaching**

The support teachers will adapt their teaching approaches and strategies to meet the individual needs of the pupils on their caseload. The Three Year DEIS action plans in Literacy and Numeracy are used to direct the level and scope of supports required and the methodologies to be used. This will involve managing the pupils learning by:

- Withdrawing pupils on an individual basis to the support room for one to one or group teaching
- Co-teaching with a class teacher. Both teachers are present in the classroom, working to meet the needs of the pupils. We are currently supporting all the classes through Station Teaching for Literacy. Class teachers and support teachers meet to plan these sessions collaboratively and decide the focus area for the term and the Learning Objectives for the children. Each class receives four sessions per week of literacy in class support. Timetabling is collaboratively decided among the team
- Wellbeing: The support teacher will come in once weekly to support the teaching of Wellbeing in each class. Programmes such as Weaving Well Being, Mind Me Mind You, Friends For Life and others as appropriate to the level and needs of the class
- Class teaching. The special education teacher may on occasion teach a particular subject area to a whole class and enable the class teacher to withdraw an SEN pupil or group and provide supplementary teaching to them
- Focused group teaching for Mathematics in all year bands

- The school is committed to recognizing and supporting learning difficulties as early as possible in the pupils' educational experience. To this end, extra resource and interventions are focused on 2<sup>nd</sup> class. Children who are considered at risk of having a specific learning disability will be screened using the LASS, with the aim of inclusion into the reading unit in third class

### **The Reading Class (SLD Class – Dyslexia)**

We welcome applications from any child who is in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> class and is experiencing significant reading difficulties. To aid inclusion, we recommend that children have completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> class curriculum before application.

The following criteria are used to ensure the appropriate candidates access the services:

- Pupils with a formal written diagnosis of severe Specific Learning Disability/ Dyslexia by a psychologist
- The primary presenting difficulty is SLD/ Dyslexia
- Psychological report must be less than 2 years old
- General cognitive ability (IQ) must be average or above average as assessed by a psychologist.
- There must be a significant discrepancy between ability (IQ) and performance.
- Students with scores on the 1st and 2nd percentile
- As the pupil teacher ratio is 9:1, places are limited and candidates will be ranked in order of priority and eligibility: See Admissions Policy

Each application will be considered and screened in accordance with our Admissions Policy with additional consultation and input from our NEPS Psychologist, The Special Class Teacher, the School Principal and the SENCO.

- Teaching takes place in small groups with additional individual support when required. These small groups are arranged around class groupings
- The Dyslexia Institute Literacy Programme is used in conjunction with The Wilson Reading System. This is supplemented and modified according to the pupils' needs
- Support Plans are drawn up and reviewed twice yearly. These are based on teacher observation and assessment and on the results of psychological testing
- Targets are set and reviewed by the teacher informally testing reading, spelling and comprehension on a daily and weekly basis
- Review will be held at the end of placement in the class

### **The Autism Class**

This class is open to children from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class. The children must have a diagnosis of Autism; a recommendation from a psychologist that a Special Class setting is appropriate to meet their needs and a letter of eligibility from SENO NCSE.

See Admissions Policy for details

### **Exceptionally able pupils**

The needs of these children are to be met through the model of SEN support introduced in Circular 0013/2017.

- The learning of these children is supported in the mainstream classroom through differentiating the curriculum by;
- Modifying the content of the curriculum. E.g. Exploring more abstract ideas and themes through group or individual work.
- Modifying the process. Developing research skills through project work. Accelerated Reader
- Modifying the product. Pupils will be given opportunities to present their work in different ways e.g. ICT, Blogs

If deemed necessary, extension activities could be provided and or supported in the Special Education setting.

## Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

In the case of School Support/ Support Plus teaching a decision should be made at the end of two instructional terms whether to continue this. If necessary, the pupil may be moved onto Stage 3 of the staged approach as outlined in section 4. Having post assessed the pupil, supplementary teaching may be continued or the pupil may be returned to the mainstream class.

- The decision making process should involve consultation between the principal, the class teacher, the support teacher and parents/ guardians.
- Account should be taken of the overall School Support demands in the school.
- Adherence to the school's policy on the provision of supplementary teaching must be clear.
- Drumcondra and Sigma T standardised results and CAT scores are a consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some / all of the learning targets set. These will be used to support the decision to continue or discontinue support.
- Consideration will also be given as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently in the classroom environment.
- Continuing the provision of school support should result in a review of a pupils' support file.

## Resources

The support team comprises eleven full-time teachers and one part-time teacher, together with seven full-time Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and one part-time SNA. Each support teacher is assigned their own classroom to facilitate the delivery of targeted supports.

SNA duties are allocated on an annual basis by the Principal in consultation with the SENCO, and in accordance with Department of Education Circular 0030/2014 – *Special Needs Assistants (SNAs): Duties and Responsibilities*.

- Support teachers have access to a variety of resources and materials which they store in their rooms. The school encourages sharing of resources as necessary, and materials can be exchanged between classroom and support room as required. Support teachers are expected to keep track of these resources.

- The school maintains a dedicated **SEN resource library**, which is located in the staffroom. This library contains a range of specialised materials and resources to support the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. All staff members are welcome to access and borrow these materials to support teaching and learning in their classrooms.
- The SEN resource library is overseen and managed by the **SENCO**, who is responsible for the organisation, maintenance, and monitoring of resources, as well as facilitating equitable access for staff.
- In addition to physical resources, relevant SEN materials, teaching supports, and guidance documents are shared electronically via the school network. Information and materials arising from **continuing professional development (CPD)** are also disseminated through the network to ensure consistent practice and ongoing professional learning across the school community. There is a P.C and/or laptop in each support room along with a tablet for student use.
- There is a central area for assessment materials in Room 14. See Assessment Policy
- Support teachers have access to a dedicated supply of reading materials specifically selected to meet the needs of their pupils. In addition, they may draw on resources from the differentiated literacy library and from mainstream classroom collections to support and enhance their teaching.

## Records

All reports from outside agencies are kept in the child's file in the main office. Support teachers may have a copy of these to aid the preparation of School Support Files and these copies are kept in a filing cabinet in their rooms. A current copy of the child's profile and student support file is uploaded on Aladdin.

Each Support teacher also keeps on record copies of the child's support files and any programmes of work s/he has prepared for the child. Assessment and observations of the child's progress are also held. All these will be in a locked cabinet in the support teacher's room. After 6<sup>th</sup> class all relevant files will be put into the school archives and kept for the legally required amount of time.

## Supporting Transitions for children with Special Educational Needs

Holy Family Senior School recognises that periods of transition can present a significant risk to the wellbeing of pupils with special educational needs. Supporting smooth and well-planned transitions within the school—such as movement between special education teaching and mainstream classroom settings—is therefore considered essential in promoting pupil wellbeing and inclusion.

The school places a strong emphasis on structured transition planning for pupils transferring from the Junior School to the Senior School, for those moving into special class settings, and for pupils transitioning from primary to post-primary education. Formal transition meetings are held to share relevant information and to develop individualised transition plans or programmes where appropriate.

A collaborative approach is adopted, involving the pupil, teachers, and parents/guardians, to identify the child's strengths, needs, and the supports required to ensure a positive and successful transition.

## Co-ordination of SEN Personnel

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for the coordination and management of special education personnel within the school, in line with **Department of Education and Youth** policy and guidance. Where appropriate, the Principal may delegate aspects of this role to the **SENCO**, while retaining overall oversight and accountability.

Planning provision for pupils with special educational needs is informed by the **School Provision Plan for Children with Special Educational Needs**, developed in accordance with the **Continuum of Support** as outlined in the *Guidelines for Primary Schools* (DES, 2017). This provision plan identifies the level and type of supports required within each class group and is reviewed and updated **twice yearly**. Records of these reviews are maintained by school management.

In accordance with **Department of Education Circular 0030/2014 – Special Needs Assistants (SNAs): Duties and Responsibilities**, and guidance contained in the SNA Toolkit issued by the **National Council for Special Education**, the Principal may, where appropriate, deploy individual SNA resources to support more than one pupil with assessed care needs. This may involve the allocation of an SNA across more than one classroom, based on identified care needs rather than on an individual pupil basis. A **Register of Pupils in Receipt of Care Needs through the Continuum of Support** is maintained by the school in a School Needs Record Form.

The support teacher assigned to a particular pupil is responsible for coordinating any **visiting teacher or external support services** for that pupil, in consultation with the principal and/or the SEN post holder, to ensure coherence of provision and effective communication between all relevant parties.

## Collaboration and Communication

### Liaison between support teachers and class teachers

Regular consultation with class and support teachers is essential. Support teachers may use the time they have allocated for planning and review to consult with class teachers with targets they are working on with SEN pupils and how this is transferring into the mainstream setting. In certain circumstances the Principal or other support teachers may be in a position to facilitate formal consultation time for class teachers through arranging class cover and/or collaborative planning meetings during Croke Park hours. Support teachers have a consultative role to play in their liaison with class teachers.

They should;

- Aid the class teacher in meeting the special educational needs of pupils in the mainstream classroom by giving advice on how particular difficulties may impact on the pupils' curricular performance.
- Advise on inclusive practices.
- Help the class teacher in the differentiation of the class curriculum to meet the needs of the SEN pupils.
- Assist in the interpretation of psychological and other specialist reports and support the teacher making adaptations as recommended in these reports.
- Support teachers in the administration and collation of the results of standardised tests.

- Advise on assistive technology needs of the SEN pupil and on software that may be used to allow the pupil to access the mainstream curriculum.

## **Liaison between support teachers and school management**

- Support teachers may conduct behavioural observations and consult with the principal in relation to behaviours of concern exhibited by pupils with identified or emerging Special Educational Needs.
- The SENCO meets regularly with the principal to review and discuss special educational needs provision across the school.
- The SENCO and Principal convene Special Education Team (SET) meetings every four weeks. SET staff may submit items for the agenda in advance of each meeting to support effective planning and collaboration. Formal minutes of these meetings are recorded and retained in the Principal's office.
- The support team acts as a key resource for school management in responding to parental queries relating to special educational needs provision, ensuring that information shared is consistent, accurate, and aligned with school policy.
- Support teachers may undertake behavioural observations and, where concerns arise, consult with the principal regarding behaviour-related issues for pupils presenting with special educational needs, with a view to informing appropriate supports and interventions.

## **Liaison with the Department of Education and Youth**

- The Principal, in collaboration with the SENCO, is responsible for the preparation and submission of relevant data to the Department of Education and Youth to support applications for additional resources and staffing to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- The Principal is responsible for processing and approving applications from parents/guardians for exemption from the study of Irish, in accordance with Circular 0054/2022.
- Where a pupil has been recommended assistive technology by a suitably qualified external professional, the assigned support teacher will, in consultation with parents/guardians and relevant external agencies, complete and submit the application for Assistive Technology to the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), in line with Circular 0010/2013.
- The Principal is responsible for applying to the Department of Education and Youth for all relevant grants available to support pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- The Principal is also responsible for the payment of external personnel who provide services approved and funded by the Department of Education and Youth.
- The SENCO will support and facilitate the development, review, and implementation of the school's Special Education Needs policy, ensuring it aligns with the school's overall planning framework and Department of Education requirements.

## **Implementation and Review**

- The implementation of this policy will commence in \_\_\_\_\_. It will be reviewed at the end of every \_\_\_\_\_ school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

## **Ratification**

- This policy was ratified by The Board of Management of Holy Family Senior School at its meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_.

## **Appendices:**

1. Overview of Special Education Teaching (SET) Provision Based on Identified Need
2. Information gathering form from parents/guardians
3. Principal's Confirmation to BOM- Correct Deployment of SET Resources