



## Greystones Community National School

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# Greystones CNS Special Educational Needs Policy

## Introduction

This policy is informed by; The Education Act (1998), Primary School Curriculum (1999), The Learning Support Guidelines (2000), Equal Status Act 2000, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004), relevant DES circulars.

All mainstream primary schools are required to be inclusive in their policies and practices (EPSEN, 2004). In order for inclusion strategies and policies to realise the objective of fully integrating children with special needs, a wide variety of resources must be made available and correctly managed (Meegan and MacPhail, 2006). The inclusion of SEN children in mainstream schools may require additional staff-training through the Special Education Support Services (SESS) and additional physical resources as sanctioned by the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), depending on the needs of the individual child (Department of Education and Skills (DES), 2011).

## School Information

Greystones CNS is a developing school under the patronage of the Kildare & Wicklow Education and Training Board. We have a diverse enrolment with regards to children with additional needs. We also have two classes for children with autism spectrum disorder, which we refer to as The Reef. As a CNS school, our ethos is that:

- The school becomes a centre of the local community.
- Children are encouraged and supported in living their lives to the full.
- High standards are the goal in teaching and learning.
- Everybody is valued and treated with respect.
- Diversity is recognised and celebrated.
- Respect for plurality of faiths / beliefs is seen as integral to the daily routine of the school.

## Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide practical guidance to our school community about our SEN procedures and practices.

- Outline the Continuum of Support which underpins our provisions for those with additional needs.
- Comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000, The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004).
- Fulfil DES circulars including 13/17, 32/03.

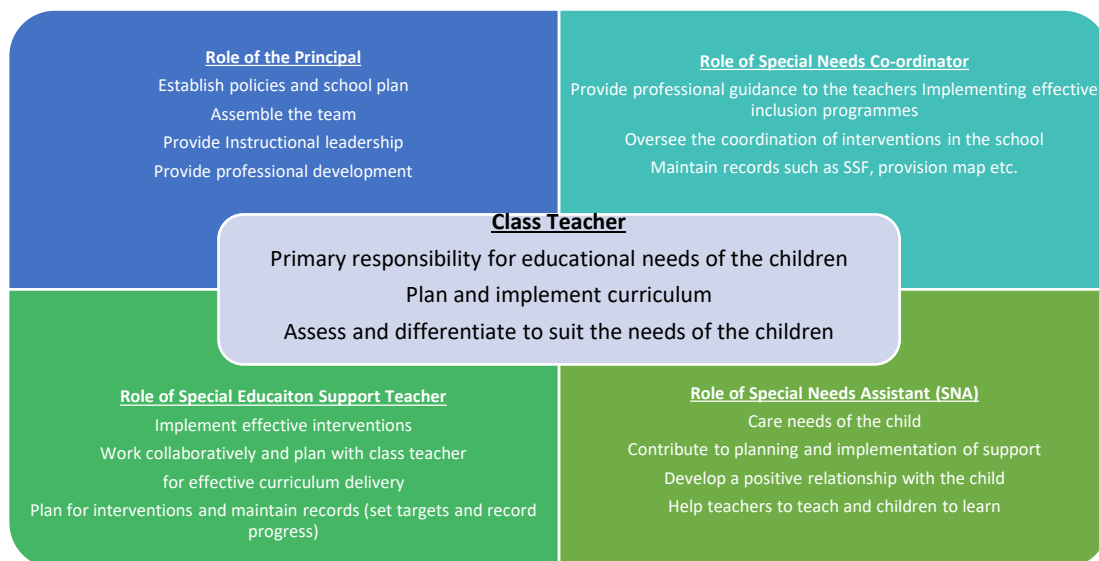
## Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to outline our procedures and practices of how we:

- Identify pupils with additional needs.
- Allocate resources to effectively meet the needs of pupils with additional needs.
- View the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Track, monitor, review and report on the progress of pupils with additional needs.
- Communicate with stakeholders.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Supporting a child’s learning is a responsibility shared by all stakeholders in the school community; The Board of Management, the Principal Teacher, SEN Coordinator, Class Teachers, SNAs, Parents and Children. We view the class teacher as central to meeting the educational needs of each child with SEN, however each stakeholder has an important role to play.



*\*Key roles of the school SEN support team members as summarised from the Inclusive Education Framework Document (2011).*

## Board of Management

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on SEN. They also ensure that adequate classroom accommodation, secure storage space and effective teaching resources are provided.

## Principal

The Learning Support Guidelines (2000 p. 39) states that the principal has overall responsibility for SEN procedures and practices in the school. The new allocation model states that the principal's leadership role is central and includes the following:

- Implement and monitor the school's Additional Needs policy on an on-going basis.
- Assign staff strategically to teaching roles, including special education roles.
- Co-ordinate teachers' work to ensure continuity of provision for all pupils.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies.
- Ensure that effective systems are implemented to identify pupils' needs and that progress is monitored methodically.
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to education of pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area.
- Assign responsibility for coordinating additional support to an identified teacher.
- Communicate with the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser).
- Oversee a whole school assessment and screening programme.
- Allocate time within the school timetable for the SET team to plan and consult with teachers and parents.
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of SET.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

## SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO)

The SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) should:

- Communicate with the principal in relation to SEN matters on an on-going basis.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs.
- Liaise with the NEPS psychologist, the SET team and class teachers to prioritise children for psychological assessments (NEPS).
- Liaise with SEN Class Co-ordinators (if applicable) to identify, support and monitor children with additional needs.
- Co-ordinate regular SET team planning meetings to ensure effective communication and support for children with additional needs.
- Collaborate with the SET team in creating timetables for additional support.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child, advise parents on procedures for availing of special needs services and update them regarding their progress.
- Co-ordinate the whole-school standardised testing at each class level.
- Co-ordinate the screening of pupils for additional support, using the results of standardised tests.
- Select children for external diagnostic assessment, where parental permission has been sought and granted.

- Oversee the tracking system of test results on password-protected software to monitor the progress of pupils (Aladdin or MS Office).
- Maintain lists of pupils who are receiving additional support.

### SEN Class Co-ordinators (SENCC)

SEN Class Co-ordinators will be assigned from the SET team to each class level or stage depending on staffing numbers. They should:

- Regularly meet with class teachers to discuss the needs of the pupils in their class.
- Maintain a record of these meetings and decisions made.
- Advise the class teacher, where needed, of possible interventions to meet the needs of their pupils.
- Advise class teacher on procedures for availing of external special needs services.
- Support the class teacher in creating a student support file once additional support is implemented.
- Support the class teacher in the writing of classroom support plans.
- With the class teacher, meet parents to discuss moving a child from classroom support to School Support or when referring to an outside agency.
- Communicate with the SENCO and the set team regarding any concerns raised by class teachers at set team planning meetings.
- Update and maintain class sen records and test results.
- Liaise with external agencies about the provision for pupils with additional needs.

### Class Teacher

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the teaching and learning of **all** pupils in their class, including those receiving additional support. They should:

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and, to the greatest extent possible, prevent the emergence of learning difficulties.
- Create a positive learning environment within the classroom.
- Differentiate teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in their class.
- Administer and correct standardised tests of achievement in literacy and numeracy, following the school's guidelines.
- Discuss outcomes of standardised testing with sen class co-ordinators to assist in the selection of children for supplementary teaching.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.
- Gather information and assess children presenting with needs to inform teaching and learning using the continuum of support.
- Open a pupil support file once additional needs have been identified and require classroom support.
- Develop classroom support plans for children in receipt of classroom support.
- Collaborate with staff to develop School Support files for each pupil in receipt of School

Support from their class.

- Meet with special education teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus and who require an individual education plan.
- Collaborate with special education teachers and relevant staff to develop an individual education plan (IEP / School Support Plus plan) for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus.
- Regularly meet with special education teachers, relevant staff to review support plans.
- Collaborate with the set team regarding teaching aims, roles and responsibilities and activities for team teaching.
- Adjust the class timetable to ensure that children in receipt of additional teaching are not missing the same subject/activity during each session.
- Where applicable, with the support of the SENCO and set team, co-ordinate the role and responsibilities of the sna working with the child.
- Liaise with and seek advice from their SENCC.

### Special Education Teacher (SET)

The SET teacher should:

- Familiarise themselves with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of need.
- Familiarise themselves with assistive technologies used by the child.
- Assist in the implementation of a broad range of whole school strategies aimed at prevention and early intervention.
- Collaboratively develop support plans (which incorporate elements of individual learning profile and programmes) for each pupil selected for School Support and School Support Plus stages.
- Meet with class Teachers, parents/guardians and other staff members to identify priority learning goals for pupils in receipt of School Support and School Support Plus.
- Collaborate with class teachers and relevant staff to develop an Individual Education Plan for each pupil in receipt of School Support Plus.
- Regularly meet with class teachers, relevant staff to review plans.
- Meet twice a year with stakeholders to draft and review support plans as School Support and School Support Plus stages.
- Update and maintain planning and progress records for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of School Support.
- Provide for early intervention and prevention through in-class and team teaching support.
- Provide supplementary teaching for literacy and numeracy on a withdrawal and in-class support basis.
- Support whole-school procedures for screening.
- Administer and interpret diagnostic tests and inform class teachers and parents of the outcomes.
- Meet with parents regarding any concerns about their child and update them regarding their progress.

- Co-ordinate class groups and offer advice and support to class teachers regarding pupils on their caseload.
- Discuss the needs and progress of children on their caseload at planning meetings.
- Provide necessary information to a SEN pupil's receiving school once a transfer letter has been received.

### Special Needs Assistants (SNA)

The duties of the SNA are set out according to the guidelines for Special Needs Assistants from the Department of Education and Skills. Under the direction of the principal, class teachers & SENCO, the SNA will meet the care needs of the SEN pupils to which they have been assigned (Circular 10/76). The duties of the SNA are outlined in our SNA Policy. They include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting the needs of pupils in effectively accessing the curriculum.
- Contributing to the quality of care and welfare of the pupils.
- Supporting learning and teaching in the classroom.
- Attending, where possible, training courses/workshops provided by the BOM.
- Attending support plan meetings and/or meetings with relevant professionals, when necessary.
- Ensuring the safety of the pupils with SEN in the schoolyard, and be present for the duration of the yard breaks along with the teachers on duty.
- Maintaining a record of support provided to pupils with SEN (student diary, daily log etc.).
- Accompanying pupils with SEN to supplementary lessons when appropriate.

### Parents

Collaboration and sharing of relevant information between home and school are essential elements of our SEN policy. Parent/Guardian should:

- Share any information, reports or reports pending from health professionals, and/or concerns regarding their child's development. Copies of professional reports should be provided to the school at the enrolment stage.
- Support the work of the school and keep the class teacher informed of the progress and challenges they observe in their child's learning.
- Attend meetings arranged by the class teacher or SET team.
- Support the targets outlined in their child's support plans and engage in all suggested home-based activities.
- Inform the post-primary school of their child's needs, at the transition stage.

### Pupils

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

- Be given the opportunity to contribute to the setting of the medium and short-term learning targets.

- Become familiar with the targets that have been set for them.
- Develop 'ownership' of the skills and strategies that are taught during supplementary teaching and learn to apply these learning strategies and skills to improve their own learning.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their progress by participating in appropriate assessment activities, including self-assessment.

## The Continuum of Support Framework

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

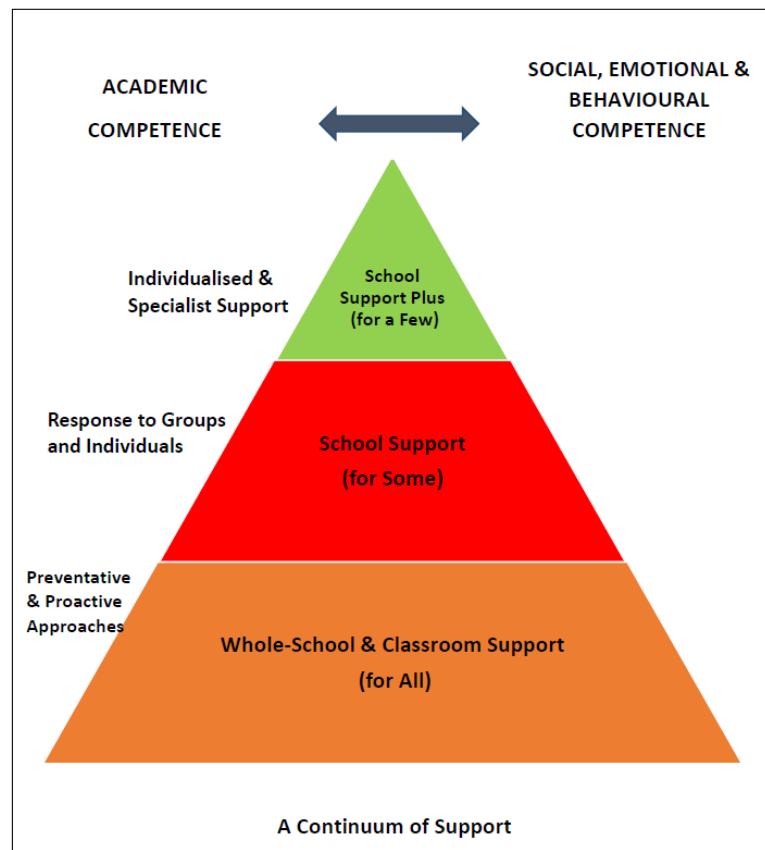
The continuum of support is a problem-solving model of assessment and intervention that enables us to gather and analyse data, as well as to plan and review the progress of individual pupils.

The problem-solving process is illustrated as follows:



Identification of educational needs is central to our policy and the new allocation model. By using the Continuum of Support framework, we can identify pupils' educational needs, to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, - sensory, language and communication difficulties. This, in turn, allows us to identify and respond to needs in a flexible way.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:



### Stage 1 – Classroom Support

Classroom support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. At this stage, the class teacher, SET co-ordinator and parents / guardians discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective.

### Stage 2 – School Support

In some cases, interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the Special Education Teacher Team (SET team) in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan. The School Support Process is outlined below.

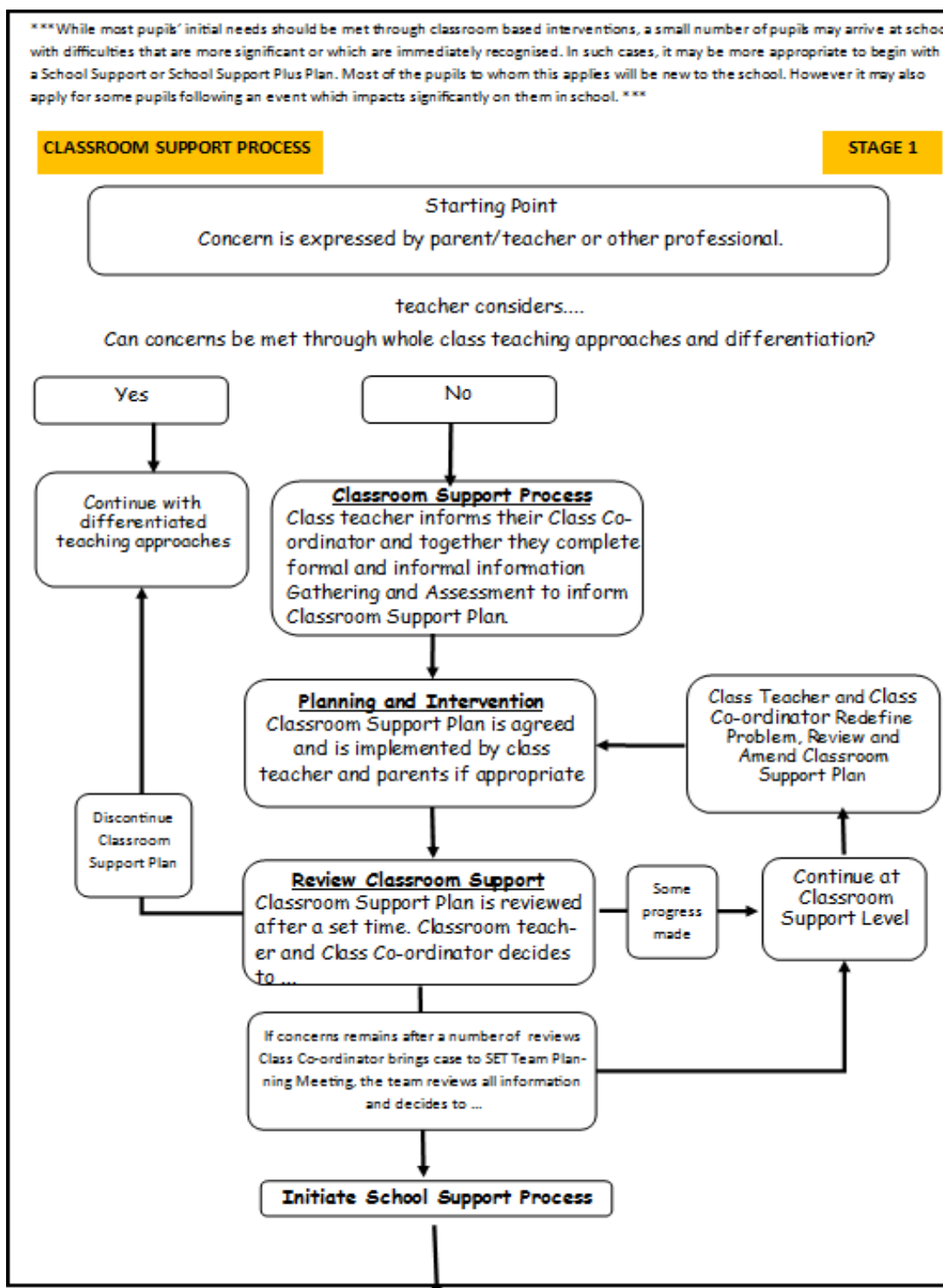
### Stage 3 – School Support Plus

If a pupil's special educational needs are **severe and/or persistent**, they are likely to need intensive support. School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and School Support will continue to be an important element of the pupil's School Support Plus Plan.

The flow diagrams below outline how we gather information to identify needs and support children with additional needs. A more comprehensive explanation of each stage can be found in the



Continuum of Support – Guidelines for teachers.



**Starting Point**  
 Child has not made progress after interventions at classroom support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 2 intervention after Standardised testing. SET Teacher and Class teacher reviews the records detailing the Classroom Support process, re-defines the problem and...

Agree and implement Classroom Support Plan

**Gathering Information**  
 SET and Class Teacher gather further information by completing formal and informal assessments to identify specific needs and strengths.

**Planning and Intervention**  
 A School Support Plan (IPLP/GPLP) is agreed and implemented by class and Special Education Teacher/s this may include the introduction of supplementary teaching

Review, redefine needs if necessary and Amend school Support Plan

Discontinue School Support Plan

School Support Plan is reviewed on a given date by the SET and Class Teacher. They decide to

If some progress made

Continue at School Support Level

Bring case to SET Team Planning Meeting if concerns remain after a number of reviews. SET team then decide to ...

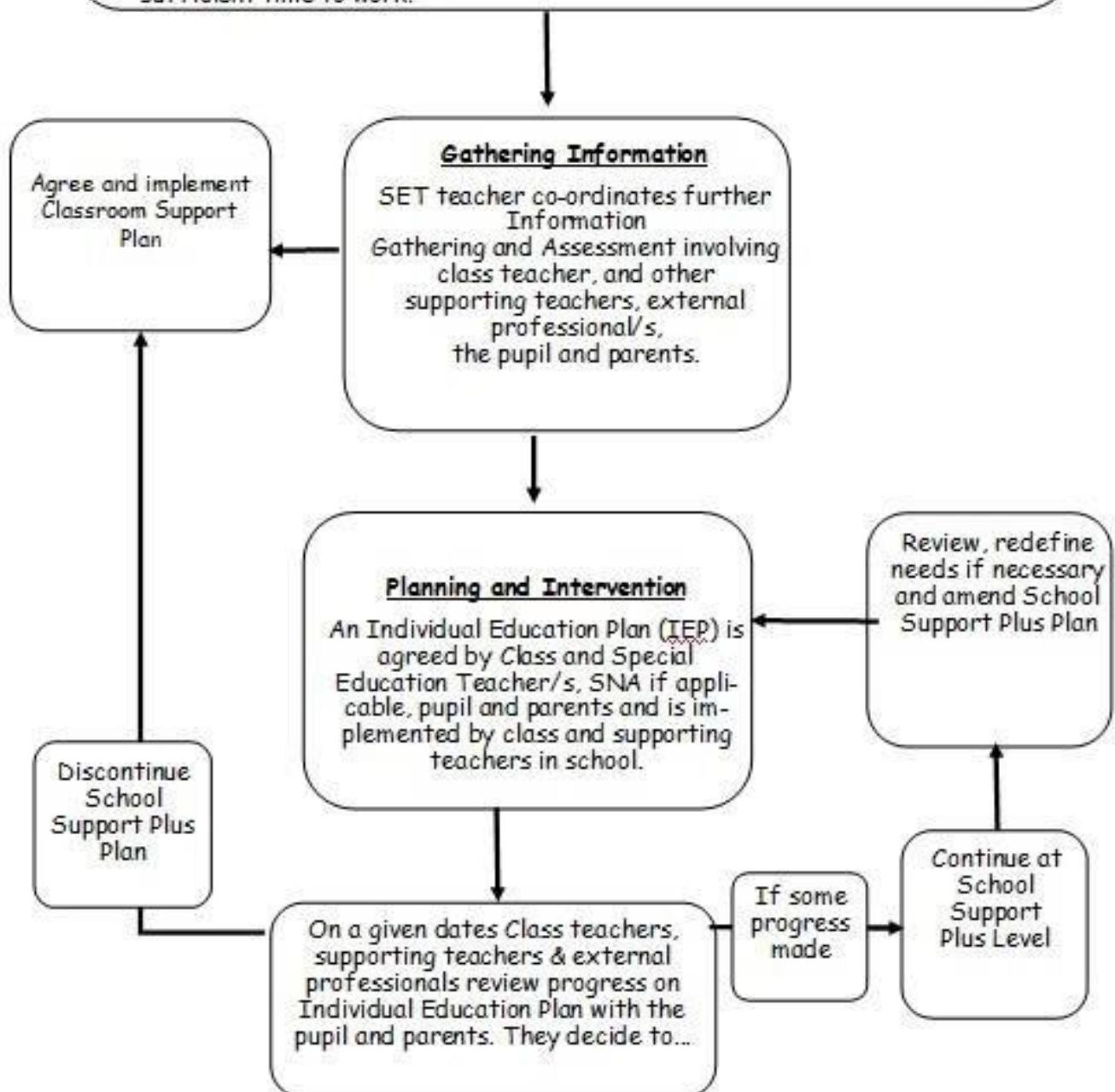
**Initiate School Support Plus Process**

**Starting Point**

Child has not made progress after interventions at school support level or child meets the criteria for a Stage 3 intervention after a diagnosis from an outside agency.

SET and Classroom teacher considers....

- Are the pupils needs causing significant barriers to learning or impeding development of social relationships?
- Is progress inadequate despite support provided?
- Were interventions; based on evidence from assessment; well planned and given sufficient time to work?



## Information Gathering and Assessment

Assessment is part of what a class teacher does on a daily basis for all children. Some methods include self-assessment, questioning, teacher observation, portfolios of work and teacher-designed tasks and tests. The information gathered enables the teacher to plan learning experiences based on the appropriate objectives from the curriculum.

In order to identify pupils who may require supplementary teaching, screening which includes standardised testing, is carried out annually from Senior Infants – 6<sup>th</sup> Class and further diagnostic testing may need to take place. Screeners are used with Junior Infants if the class teacher's informal assessments highlight a concern about a child's progress. The information gathered from these formal assessments is then used to inform decisions for support and pupil's support plans.

**SET will assist class teachers with PM Benchmarking at the start of a block of Power Hour Sen Inf-2<sup>nd</sup> Classes.** Please note that in order to benchmark children, SET teaching for the class in question is suspended and the SET time allocated to the class is used for benchmarking the class. SET may benchmark one child from each Power Hour Group on completion of the block. It is not necessary to Benchmark the entire class on completion as running records are kept as part of Power Hour and children's progress should be monitored closely throughout. Likewise, SET will help class teachers level children if they are starting a reading programme with their class.

SET will conduct formal assessment once the class teacher has gathered sufficient information through informal assessment that documents a child's difficulties over a period of time.

It is not within the remit of SET to conduct whole class assessments; this is the responsibility of the class teacher. SET will conduct assessments on children involved at Stage 1 and beyond on the Continuum of Support.

## Assessment and Screening Tests

In our school we carry out the following assessment procedures:

- Junior Infants: Observation, Checklists, BIAP (as necessary) MIST (as appropriate)
- Senior Infants: Observation, Checklists, MIST (as appropriate) PM+ Running Records, Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy, DTEN Diagnostc (as necessary), Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy
- 1st class: Observation, Checklists, Micra & Sigma, PM+ Running Records
- 2nd class: Observation, Checklists, Micra & Sigma
- 3rd class: Observation, Checklists, Micra & Sigma
- 4th class: Observation, Checklists, Micra & Sigma
- 5th class: Observation, Checklists, Micra & Sigma
- 6th class: Observation, Checklists, Micra & Sigma

We also administer the WIAT III (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) as appropriate and necessary. A member of staff holding a relevant SEN qualification administers this test. NEPS will liaise with the administering teacher in the administering and scoring of the WIAT III.

We continually review the assessment and screening tests that we use in order to balance the needs of our pupils and the need to provide information for appropriate support. Therefore we may deviate from the above list prior to the review date.

## Inventory of Test Materials

### Screening Tests Available in GCNS

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile (BIAP)
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Micra-T
- Sigma-T
- Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy
- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy
- Drumcondra Primary Reading
- Drumcondra Primary Maths
- Dyslexia Screening Test (DST-J)
- Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT)
- Test of Language Comprehension (TALC)
- Renfrew Action Picture Test

### Diagnostic Tests Available in GCNS

- Jackson Phonics Test
- WIAT III
- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy - Diagnostic

## Early Intervention and Prevention

Early intervention and prevention plays a key role in our approach to supporting children. Close collaboration and consultation between the class teachers and the SET TEAM will identify pupils who may be in need of early intervention. Early intervention programmes may be provided by the class teacher and/or SET TEAM in accordance with the Staged Approach. Our strategies for preventing learning difficulties include:

- The development of agreed approaches to the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy in order to ensure progression and continuity from class to class.
- Provision of additional support in language development and any relevant early literacy and mathematical skills to pupils who need it.
- Ongoing structured observation and assessment of the language, 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 Teacher and the SET team.

- Promotion of literacy e.g. Print-rich environment, First Steps Literacy Programme, DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), Power Hour, Paired Reading / Shared Reading, Building Bridges
- Promotion of Numeracy e.g. Ready Set Go Maths, Hands-on approach, Maths Station Teaching
- Parental involvement in promoting literacy and numeracy e.g. Homework Policy Guidelines for Parents.
- Differentiation - adapting the learning environment.
- In-class support from the SET team.
- Team-teaching with support from SET team
- Withdrawing individuals and groups.

## Meeting the Needs and Allocating Resources

Once pupils needs have been identified, Special Education Teachers (SETs) are deployed to address these needs as required. We deploy SETs in a variety of ways in order to effectively meet pupils' needs. We aim to strike a balance between in-class support, group and individual support while ensuring that the needs of children with additional needs are met inclusively.

Importantly, the level and type of support reflect the specific targets of individual pupils as set out in their support plans and are informed by careful monitoring and review of progress. In this way, following a period of intervention, some pupils may no longer require additional teaching supports; some may require the same level, while others may require more intensive supports.

In planning the allocation of additional teaching supports, the over-riding principle is that resources are deployed to address the identified needs of pupils. Importantly, those with **the highest level of need should have access to the greatest level of support**. We consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. In addition to literacy and numeracy difficulties, many pupils will have specific needs in such areas as oral language, social interaction, behaviour, emotional development, motor skills and application to learning.

At the end of each term the SEN Coordinators (SENCo) meet class teachers and review children's needs, the resources in place and progress made using the Continuum of Support problem-solving model of assessment and stage approach flow charts. The SENCos then bring this information to the end of term SET team planning meetings. As a SET team, we review all support and allocate resources for the subsequent term.

We cross-reference the needs of pupils at School Support and School Support Plus levels and consider common needs that can be met by grouping, to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning approaches.

In line with the staged approach, all interventions should:

- Be set within a specific time frame.
- Be based on a shared expectation of success with everyone involved.



- Include a strong focus on oral language, key skill development, laying the foundation for meaningful reading activities and further development of language and comprehension skills.
- Engage the pupils in frequent supervised activities at an appropriate level of difficulty and monitor their comprehension.
- Literacy based interventions - stress the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading and comprehension.
- Maths based interventions - focus on language development in numeracy, and in the development of mathematical procedures and concepts.
- Social / Emotional based interventions – focus on developing independence around self-regulation.

## SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL TEACHING SUPPORT

<b>Stage 3 School Support Plus</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Children with identified complex needs who are currently attending outside agencies for support or children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Disability</li> <li>• Hearing Impairment</li> <li>• Visual Impairment</li> <li>• Emotional Disturbance</li> <li>• Moderate General Learning Disability</li> <li>• Severe/Profound General Learning Disability</li> <li>• Autistic Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>• Assessed Syndrome</li> <li>• Specific Speech and Language Disorder/Impairment</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<b>Individual Education Plans</b>	<p><b>Type of Support</b> In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p><b>Personnel</b> SET teacher Class Teacher Outside Agencies</p>
<b>Stage 2 School Support</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Children in JI &amp; SI whom English is an additional language or children whom English is an additional language newly arrived in Ireland in 1st – 6th</li> <li>3. Children on or below STEN 3 in school’s annual standardised testing</li> <li>4. Children with an identified need assessed by external professionals who are not on or below the 12th percentile in Literacy such as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>2. Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>3. Specific Learning Disability</li> <li>4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Children on or under the 12th Percentile in SIGMA T</li> <li>6. Children with a identified need by external professionals who are not on or below the 12th percentile in Numeracy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Borderline Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>2. Mild General Learning Disability</li> <li>3. Specific Learning Disability</li> <li>4. Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Children who have not made adequate progress after interventions at Stage 1</li> <li>8. Children in 1st – 6th who have not made adequate progress after EAL interventions</li> </ol>	<b>Group or Individual Profile and Learning Programme</b>	<p><b>Type of Support</b> In-Class Support Team-Teaching Group Withdrawal Individual Withdrawal</p> <p><b>Personnel</b> SET teacher Class Teacher</p>



## Timetabling

Responsibility for timetabling SEN support staff and resources lies with the SENCO and is overseen by the Principal. When drawing up timetables it is important to remember that:

- Timetables should be reviewed regularly and changed as appropriate.
- Children should not miss the same subject each time they are withdrawn.
- If a pupil is unavailable for their supplementary session due to special circumstances, the Special Education Teacher will attempt to reschedule the session with the co-operation of another teacher.
- Interruptions to classes/classrooms should be kept to a minimum.
- A balance between in-class support, group and 1-1 interventions should be achieved at all class levels. SENCO in collaboration with the Principal have the final decision on the nature of interventions to be provided.

## Tracking, Recording and Reviewing Progress

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and / or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem-solving process. Specific SMART targets will be set for each individual child based on their learning needs. SETs should ensure that these are measurable and have assessments and data to show that the child has reached their targets where possible. Support plans are working documents and a child's progress should be noted regularly on their plan and shared with relevant stakeholders.

## Student Support Files

We use a Student Support File to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the Continuum of Support. It facilitates us in documenting progress and needs over time and assists us in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Our Student Support File template is stored on Aladdin. All support files should include:

- Cover page detailing the pupil's details (Appendix 1)
- Stage 1 – Basic Needs Checklist (Appendix 2), Learning Environment Checklist (Appendix 3) and My Thoughts About School (Appendix 4), Classroom Support Checklist (Appendix 5)
- Stages 2 & 3 – Learning Environment Checklist & My Thoughts About School, School Support Checklist (Appendix 6) – all completed annually.
- A log of Actions (shared with class teacher on Aladdin)
- Record of support received
- Standardised/ Diagnostic test scores
- Support plans (See below) and reviews
- Medical information (as necessary)

- Checklists and other relevant assessment
- Reports received from external agencies and professionals
- Correspondence with external agencies e.g. SENO, Lucena Clinic

A class teacher or class coordinator should open a Student Support File once a child is placed on Stage 1 – Classroom Support on the continuum. This is stored in the teacher’s in-class filing cabinet. A soft copy can be stored on Aladdin.

If, after a number of reviews, the child’s case is moved to School Support, this information is relayed to the SENCO and SENCC. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and the allocated SET to access and update the information in the Student Support File. The same system is in place for children on School Support Plus.

## Support Plans (Appendix 8 – 10)

We use three different support plans for the three stages of support on the Continuum of Support. We have our own school template which must be used. The GCNS support plan templates incorporate elements from previous Individual Learning Profile and Programme Plans. It is also important to note that in GCNS we refer to IEPs and School Support Plus Plans.

### Stage 1 – Classroom Support

A SSF should be opened once a child is placed at Stage 1. A Support Plan at stage 1 is a **Classroom Support Plan**. (CSP) This is a simple plan which is drawn up & reviewed by the Class Teacher in collaboration with the SEN Class Coordinator. Parents / Guardians should be consulted before a plan is drafted. The CSP outlines priority concerns, targets, strategies to help achieve the targets, criteria for success and the staff and resources needed to implement the plan. The plan is shared with parents by email and also in hard copy. Parents / Guardians are asked to sign and date the plan, this is retained by the school. If it is not possible to get a the plan signed, the teacher should print a copy of the email demonstrating that the plan was shared with the parents / guardians and filed with the plan in the SSF, a record of communication should be kept on the Log of Actions.

The school’s review page should be used when reviewing plans and added to the SSF. CSPs should be reviewed every 6 weeks. A decision to move a child to Stage 2 should not be made until at least one full term of implementation at Stage 1 has passed.

### Stage 2 – School Support

A Support Plan at stage 2 of the Continuum of Support. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed SET teacher. It will set out the nature of the pupil’s learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should, for the most part, be implemented within the normal classroom setting i.e. through in-class support and team teaching. It should also be complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, additional teaching might be within a

small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis. Home-based actions may also be included. After the plan has been drawn up, it should become a working document through the careful monitoring of the pupil's response to the actions taken and progress made.

Plans at School Support Level are reviewed once throughout the year using the cycle outlined below.

### Stage 3

A Support Plan at stage 3 is an **School Support Plus Plan (IEP)**. This plan is drawn up by the class teacher and appointed Special Education Teachers, in consultation with the child's parents/guardians, professionals external to the school and (if appropriate) the child based on the information gathered. It will set out;

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil
- The special educational needs of the pupil
- The special education and related support services to be provided to the pupil to enable the pupil to benefit from including:
  - Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting
  - Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
  - Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
  - Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports, if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
  - Support required from a Special Needs Assistant (ISA), if appropriate
  - The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months
  - The pupil's priority learning needs, long and short term targets to be achieved, the monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place

Support plan meetings are coordinated by the SET working with the child. Parents / Guardians will be invited to the initial meeting and the subsequent review meeting.

## School Support and School Support Plus Planning and Review Cycle



## SEN Records

### Individual SEN Files

All School Support and School Support Plus SSF are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office. Support plans and professional reports are shared with the Principal, SENCO, relevant SET and class teacher through restricted access folders on Aladdin. All staff are made aware of their responsibilities under GDPR and are explicitly told not to download or copy sensitive information from Aladdin, these are for reference for planning only. It is the responsibility of SETs to update and manage the files of the children on School Support and School Support Plus that they support. It is the responsibility of the class teachers, with the support of their assigned SET, to update and manage the SEN files of children on classroom support. SSF for children at classroom support (Stage 1) are stored in the class teacher's locked filing cabinet.

### In-school Communications

Regular SET meetings take as required, usually weekly. Outside of this time, one hour of Croke Park time is allocated to collaborative planning per planning cycle i.e. one hour per fortnight. SET provide cover when class teachers are needed to attend planning and review meetings for School Support and School Support Plus Stages.

### Health & Safety Issues / Concerns

Every member of our school community is entitled to a safe, secure environment and to be treated with due respect. All appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of each pupil with SEN. When a place is offered to a child with SEN, every effort will be

made to ensure that the supports to which the child is entitled to are in place as soon as possible. Our senior leadership school liaise with a child's current educational provider prior to enrolment and will also conduct a home visit for children with additional needs who will be starting at Stage 3 of the Continuum of Support.

Staff members will be informed of any potential risks and, where necessary, individual plans / care plans will be drawn up and implemented.

## Supervision of Children in Receipt of Additional Support

- Where pupils receive support on a one-to-one basis, the SET teacher is responsible for ensuring that both they and the pupil are visible through the glass panel in the door for the duration of the session.
- Where there is no glass panel, the door of the room should remain open for the duration of the session.
- Where pupils are withdrawn for support, the SET teacher should collect and return children to their classrooms.
- Where a child has access to an SNA, they may withdraw the child from the class e.g. for a movement break, if a plan is in place with the class teacher.

## Retention of Pupils at a Class Level

### Rationale

The primary school curriculum is designed as an 8-year course – a 2 year infant cycle followed by 6 years from 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Class, with children progressing to the next class level at the end of each school year. The primary school curriculum is flexible and child-centred and can be adapted to meet children's needs. The provision of a SET team and a range of other resources in the school provide considerable support for pupils experiencing difficulties from Junior Infants – Sixth Class. The level of provision available should enable pupils to make progress in keeping with their needs and abilities and to move consecutively through the different class levels in keeping with their peers.

In very exceptional circumstances it may be educationally beneficial for a pupil to repeat a class level. When discussing the retention of a pupil, we will be cognisant of the potential emotional negatives for a child who is retained in the same class level.

The decision to allow a pupil to repeat a class level sits with the Board of Management.

### Procedures

The following procedures apply for retention of a pupil in the same class level for a further school year:

- DES policy is that children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and only in exceptional circumstances (Circular 32/03, Appendix 11).
- No pupil will be held back for longer than 1 year throughout their time in primary school.
- In accordance with Circular 32/03, the school will not operate a repeat 6<sup>th</sup> Class.
- Parents / Guardians wishing to have a pupil retained in the same class level must make an application in writing to the Board of Management. This application must state the reasons why the pupil should be considered for retention and, barring exceptional circumstances,

must be received by the principal before March 31<sup>st</sup> for pupil retention in the subsequent school year.

- A record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a pupil will be kept for any pupil so retained. In addition, a clear programme will be outlined for such a pupil that records precisely what new approach will be used for them and what its expected benefits will be. These records will be retained within the child's SSF and will be brought to the Inspector's attention on visiting the school.

### Factors to be considered

When making their decision, the Board of Management will consider the following:

- Results from tests such as screeners, standardised tests, diagnostic tests. Measured against peer attainment in the same tests.
- Agreement between all stakeholders (the Principal, class teacher, SET team and parents / guardians) that retention is in the child's best interest.
- The enrolment numbers in the class level in question i.e. the school's capacity to safely accommodate the retention of a pupil.

Additionally, the Board will consider:

- The educational benefit to the pupil to be retained in the same class level.
- Reports from educational professionals.
- Current provision of support for the child.
- What other educational supports may be put in place or are likely to be obtained.
- The pupil's previous / present application to work in school and to homework.
- Engagement with and implementation of agreed targets at home.
- Co-operation and support obtained from the parents / guardians of the pupil.
- Attendance at school.
- Any potential detrimental / adverse affect on the pupil's retention to the teaching & learning of other pupils in the class in question.

### Consultation

The Board, through the Principal, will consult with the following in reaching a decision:

- The class teacher of the pupil
- The SET team including SNA if appropriate
- Parents / Guardians of the pupil

## Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Greystones CNS ratified this plan on \_\_\_\_\_.

<u>Chairperson:</u>		<u>Principal:</u>	
<u>Signed:</u>		<u>Signed:</u>	
<u>Date:</u>		<u>Date:</u>	

This whole school plan is available to view at the school by the parents on request.

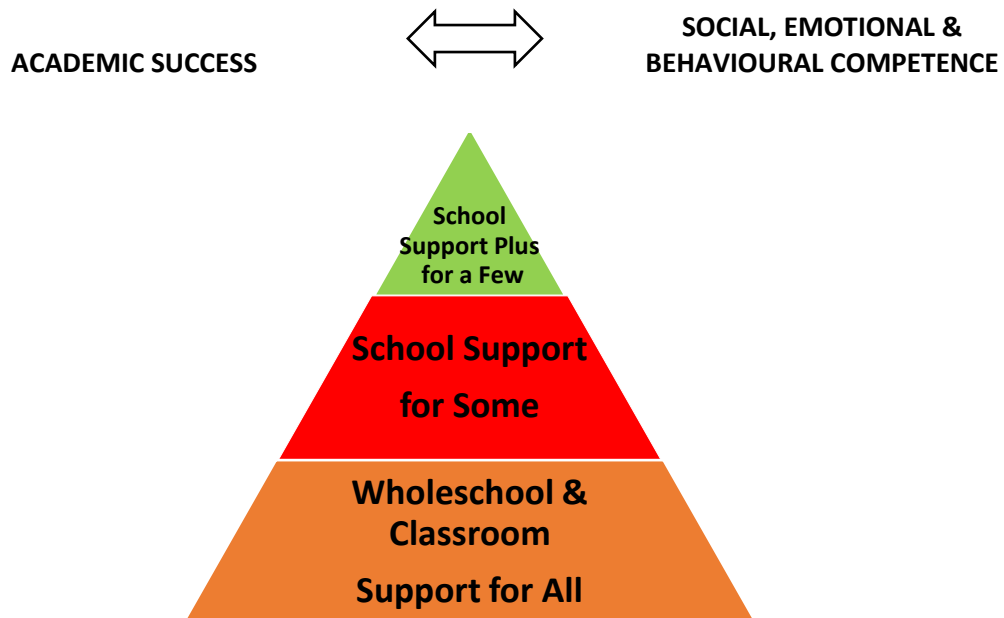
To be reviewed during the academic year 2024/25.

## Appendix 1 – GCNS Student Support File Initial Page



<b>STUDENT SUPPORT FILE</b>	
<b>Name of Student</b>	
<b>Date of Birth</b>	
<b>School</b>	<b>Greystones CNS</b>
<b>Date File Opened</b>	
<b>Date File Closed</b>	

### 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.



## Appendix 2 – Basic Needs Checklist

This page shows a checklist can be useful in considering a pupil's basic needs

Name:

---

Headings under which to consider a pupil's basic needs:

- Physiological needs e.g. does the child have adequate food, warmth, housing etc?
- Safety needs e.g. does the child need physical or psychological protection?
- Belonging needs e.g. does the pupil have close family and friends, feel part of his / her class.
- Esteem needs: e.g. does the child receive respect, positive feedback from others and respect others and self?

Possible actions suggested to the teacher on the basis of the questions above:

## Appendix 3 – Learning Environment Checklist

### Learning Environment Checklist

**Environment / Physical Conditions:** Tick the area where action could be taken to make a difference for the pupil

- |                          |  |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Layout of room & furniture   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adequate working space for students & teacher                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Good decor / lots of displays etc?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ease of movement in room   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Temperature  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lighting   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Noise level  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seating - Facing board - neighbouring pupil compatibility - height for writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Appropriate resources/ equipment organised and readily available for all pupils? |                          |  |

### Social Factors / Relationships:

- Classroom procedures & rules are made clear and understood by all pupils and consistently applied
- Clear instructions are given about the tasks in a variety of ways (oral, visual, gestures)
- Changes between tasks are managed smoothly and effectively
- Pupils know what to do next without asking
- The class is generally on task
- A variety of different actions (academic & behaviour) are frequently noticed and praised
- A variety of praise and rewards are used
- Pupils can be monitored sufficiently during a task to ensure understanding and continuing progress
- Any disruptive or off-task behaviour is effectively managed
- Good communication and feedback between teacher and each pupil about progress is maintained

### Teaching & Learning - Methods, Materials & Procedures:

The extent to which

- Tasks set are appropriate for the pupil's level of understanding and skills.
- Learning goals are clearly defined and shared with the pupil.
- Opportunities are provided for the pupil to engage in activities in which s/he can be successful.
- Steps in learning goals are small enough to ensure progress.
- Activity content / tasks are of interest to the pupil.
- Tasks set take account of pupil learning style: pace of activity, variety of activities, length of activities and time allowed to complete a task are appropriate.
- A variety of teaching approaches used.
- Opportunities are provided for a variety of pupil responses- oral/ practical/ written.
- Opportunities are provided for pupil involvement in decision making and recording .
- Opportunities are provided for pupil to generalise/transfer learning from one situation to another.
- Regular monitoring and recording of progress occurs

## Classroom Activity

routines established for:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entering class       | <input type="checkbox"/> leaving class                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> giving out resources | <input type="checkbox"/> gathering resources           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> asking for help      | <input type="checkbox"/> gaining whole class attention |

## Rules / Rewards / Consequences

Rules are:

- |  |   |                                    |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> few in number | <input type="checkbox"/> decided upon in consultation with pupils | <input type="checkbox"/> displayed |
|--|---|------------------------------------|

rewards and consequences are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> named                             | <input type="checkbox"/> linked to behaviour                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rewards are rewarding to class    | <input type="checkbox"/> rewards are achievable             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sanctions are understood and fair | <input type="checkbox"/> sanctions are imposed consistently |

## School Environment

Tick which area needs change

- |   |  |   |   |                                |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playground/ yard                 | <input type="checkbox"/> layout  | <input type="checkbox"/> equipment                                | <input type="checkbox"/> supervision          | <input type="checkbox"/> rules |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movement: effective routines for | <input type="checkbox"/> movement around school                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> lining up                                | <input type="checkbox"/> corridors            |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Break/lunchtimes                 | <input type="checkbox"/> clear simple rules                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> rewards and consequences clear           | <input type="checkbox"/> activities available |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff support                    | <input type="checkbox"/> staff discuss difficulties                              |   |   |                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy                           | <input type="checkbox"/> behaviour policy exists                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> policy is understood and agreed by staff |   |                                |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> range of rewards for good class, yard, school behaviour | <input type="checkbox"/> range of sanctions in place              |   |                                |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> range of strategies used for managing behaviour         |   |   |                                |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> behaviour is assessed and monitored                     |   |   |                                |

Summary of Concerns

Actions Required

## Appendix 4 – GCNS My Thoughts About School Template



### My Thoughts About School ...

<u>Name</u>	
<u>Class</u>	
<u>Teacher</u>	
<u>SNA</u>	
<u>Date</u>	

The things I like best in school are:	
The things I don't like about school are:	
The things that I am good at are:	
My friends are:	
I am happy when:	
I need help with:	

## Appendix 5 – Classroom Support Checklist

Name:

D.O.B

Class:

Date:

Teacher:

GENERAL INFORMATION	CHECKED (YES/NO)	SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
Parents consulted		
Information from previous school/preschool, or previous class teacher gathered		
Hearing		
Vision		
Motor Skills		
Medical Needs		
Basic Needs checklist completed		
Assessment of learning-screening, attainments tested, if appropriate		

GENERAL INFORMATION CONTD...	CHECKED (YES/NO)	SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
Observation of learning style/ approach to learning		
Observation of behaviour		
Interview with pupil		
Classroom work differentiated		
Learning environment adapted		
Yard/school environments adapted		
Informal consultation with outside professionals		
<b>ACTION NEEDED</b>		
<b>ACTIONS AGREED WITH PARENTS AND RELEVANT STAFF</b>		

## Appendix 6 – School Support Checklist

<b>School Support Checklist</b>		
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Class:</b>
<b>General Information</b>	<b>Date Checked</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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?		
<b>Action needed</b>		

## Appendix 8 – GCNS Classroom Support Plan Template



### **Classroom Support Plan**

Student's name		D.O.B.	
Lead teacher		Age (Yrs / Mths)	
Start date of plan		Class / Year	
Review date of plan			
<b><u>Priority concerns</u></b>			
<b><u>Targets</u></b>			
<b><u>Strategies to help the student achieve the targets</u></b>			
<b><u>Criteria for Success / How will you know if the interventions have worked?</u></b>			
<b><u>Staff involved and resources needed</u></b>			
Date parent informed			
Signature of teacher			
<b><u>Reviewed by (sign &amp; date):</u></b>	<b><u>Review Comments</u></b>		



## Appendix 9 – GCNS School Support Plan Template



### **School Support Plan**

Student's name		D.O.B.	
Lead teacher		Age (Yrs / Mths)	
Start date of plan		Class / Year	
Review date of plan			
<b><u>Student's strengths and interests</u></b>			
<b><u>Priority concerns</u></b>			
<b><u>Targets for the student</u></b>			
<b><u>Strategies to help the student achieve the targets</u></b>			
<b><u>Criteria for Success / How will you know if the interventions have worked?</u></b>			
<b><u>Staff involved and resources needed</u></b>			
Signature of Parent(s) / Guardian(s)			
Signature of teacher			
<b><u>Reviewed by (sign &amp; date):</u></b>		<b><u>Review Comments</u></b>	

## Appendix 10 – GCNS School Support Plus Plan Template

### **School Support Plus Planning Sheet**



<b>Student's name</b>		<b>D.O.B.</b>	
<b>Parent(s) / Guardian(s)</b>		<b>Class / Year</b>	
<b>Start date of plan</b>		<b>Teacher SNA</b>	
<b>Review date of plan</b>		<b>SET</b>	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name of Test</u>	<u>Administered By</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>

### **School Based Tests**

Date	Name of Test	Administered By	Outcome

#### **Summary of information (Parents, child, class teacher, SET, SNA)**

Access to curriculum:

Learning Style:

Attendance: To date – 100 %

#### **Concentration**

*Whole class activities:*

*Small group activities:*

*Independent activities:*

*1:1 setting:*

#### **Motivation / Self-Management:**

#### **Hobbies, Interests, Likes, Strengths**

#### **Sensory**

#### **Behaviour Concerns / Triggers / Anxiety (ABCs)**

#### **Motivators**

#### **Social and Interpersonal Skills**

Turn taking:

Free play (outside):

Structured play (classroom based):

Understanding of social rules and conventions:

#### **Learning Needs**

#### **Further information (Changes at home, new house, new sibling, bereavement, new medication etc.)**



## **School Support Plus Plan**

This School Support Plus Plan has been developed to support your child's progress. It will inform teaching and learning in 1:1, group and whole class settings and can be used at home also. It is a working document and as such is subject to change. The targets are specific and have been prioritised from your child's overall needs.

<b><u>Priority Targets (What)</u></b>	<b><u>Strategies to achieve priority targets / Programmes to be used (How)</u></b>	<b><u>Personnel Responsible (Who)</u></b>	<b><u>Comments</u></b>

## Appendix 11 – Circular 32/03 Retention of Pupils



Primary Circular 32/03

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE PRIMARY BRANCH

## **TO: BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT, PRINCIPAL TEACHERS AND ALL TEACHING STAFF IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

### RETENTION OF PUPILS IN SAME GRADE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Circular amends [Primary Circular 11/01](#) regarding the regulations governing the retention of pupils in Primary Schools.

#### **2. Current Policy on Retention**

- 2.1 The Primary School curriculum is designed as an eight year course, including a two year infant cycle followed by six years in standards from first to sixth, with children progressing to the next grade at the end of each school year. The primary curriculum is flexible and child-centred, and can be adapted to meet children's needs.
- 2.2 The Department is providing considerable support for pupils with learning difficulties in schools. Learning support teachers, resource teachers, special needs assistants and a wide range of resources under the various schemes for schools in areas designated as disadvantaged are among the forms of provision allocated to schools for these pupils. The level of provision available should enable pupils to make progress in keeping with their needs and abilities and to move consecutively through the different class levels in the school along with their peers.
- 2.3 Under the Department's policy, children should only be allowed to repeat a year for educational reasons and in exceptional circumstances. An additional grade level should not operate through the retention of all or a substantial number of pupils at a grade level.

- 2.4 In such exceptional circumstances a Principal teacher, following consultation with the learning support teacher/resource teacher and class teacher and parent(s) may conclude that a pupil would benefit educationally by repeating a grade level. A record outlining the educational basis for the decision to retain a child should be kept for any pupil so retained. In addition, there should be a clear programme outlined for such a pupil that records precisely what new approach will be used for her/him and what its expected benefit will be. These records should be retained within the school and should be brought to the Inspector's attention by the Principal when s/he visits the school. No pupil should repeat a grade more than once in a primary school.
- 2.5 In all cases where the proposed retention of pupils has staffing implications the Primary Payments Section of the Department of Education & Science should be notified.

### 3 Transfer of Pupils to another Primary School to Repeat Sixth Class

- 3.1 Pupils who have completed sixth class must not transfer to another primary school to repeat sixth class. In the event that a school were to enrol pupils from another school to repeat sixth class the pupils shall not be included as eligible pupils for staffing and other purposes. Capitation and other grants in respect of such pupils shall not be paid.

### 4. Elimination of Nine Year Cycle

- 4.1 Since the issue of [Primary Circular 11/01](#) in March 2001 a school must not operate a middle infants class or a repeat sixth class/ seventh class. In the event that a school continues the practice of enrolling pupils in a middle infant or a repeat class the Department will discount the pupils in such classes for the purpose of determining the valid enrolment of the school. Capitation and other grants in respect of such pupils shall not be paid.

This circular may also be accessed on the Department of Education & Science website at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

Johnny Bracken  
Principal Officer.

December 2003