



# Polasaí Tacaíocht do pháistí le riachtanais speisialta/

*Support Policy for Children with Additional  
Educational Needs*

---

Ratified by BOM:	<u>15.9.2021</u>
------------------	------------------

## **Relationship to the ethos of the school**

Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg aims to provide a child-centered education for all of our pupils which will allow each child the opportunity to develop his/her abilities to their full potential. Parents will be actively involved in the provision of this education.

### ***Abbreviations***

SEN: Special educational needs

SENO: Special educational needs organizer

ASD: Autistic Spectrum Disorder

DES: Department of Education and Skills

NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service

IEP: Individual Education Plan

NARA: Neal analysis of reading ability

NRIT: Non-reading intelligence test

NCCA: National Council for Curriculum Assessment

NCSE: National Council for Special Education

SDP: School Development Planning

SESS: Special Education Support Services

SNA: Special Needs Assistant.

SP: Support Teacher

### **Guiding Principles:**

- All our children have a right to an education, which is appropriate to them as individuals. We want all our children to feel that they are a valued part of our school community we want all of our children to develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning.
- The resources provided to support pupils with special educational needs, will be used to facilitate the development of a truly inclusive school

- Supports provided to pupils with special educational needs will be based on identified needs and be informed by regular reviews of progress (in consultation with parents and pupils) as outlined in the Continuum of Support Guidelines
- The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress and care of all pupils in the classroom, including pupils with special educational needs
- Pupils with the greatest levels of need will have access to the greatest level of support, and whenever possible, these pupils will be supported by teachers with relevant expertise who can provide continuity of support

As far as possible, therefore, it is our aim to minimise the difficulties that children may experience. We aim to achieve this by adopting three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive curriculum.

**Inclusion:**

We are fully committed to the principle of inclusion and the good practice which makes it possible. Our policy as set out in this document, aims to enable children with special educational needs, traveller children and children whose first language is not Irish, to become fully integrated members of our school community. This will be achieved by careful consideration of the needs of each child and by either modifying activities or by providing support that will help the child to participate in them.

### Three principles for inclusion

**Setting Suitable Learning Challenges**

We aim to give every child the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible. In order to do this, Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg will use the 'Continuum of Support Process' as outlined in Table 1 below to identify educational needs. Identification of educational needs is central to setting suitable learning challenges for our SEN pupils. Using the continuum of support framework, our school will identify pupils' educational needs to include academic, social and emotional needs, as well as needs associated with physical, sensory, language and communication difficulties. It is important to look at a pupils' needs in context, and to use our resources to support this.

**Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs through the Continuum of Support Process**

<p><b>Classroom Support</b> <b>(Standard score 80-85)</b></p>	<p>The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class.</p> <p>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>• Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>• Basic needs checklist *</li> <li>• Learning environment checklist*</li> <li>• Pupil consultation - My Thoughts About School Checklist</li> <li>• Literacy and numeracy tests</li> <li>• Screening tests of language skills</li> </ul> <p>A classroom support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>
<p><b>School Support</b> <b>(standard score under 80)</b></p>	<p>At this level a support plan is devised and informed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Teacher observation records</li> <li>Teacher-designed measures/assessments</li> <li>Parent and pupil interviews             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning environment checklist</li> <li>• Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy</li> <li>• Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures</li> <li>• Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small groups or individual tuition. Teachers will fine tune programmes and methods and will modify and adapt interventions depending on the pupil's response and rate of progress.</p> <p>A school support plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.</p>

<p>School Support Plus (pupils with reports from outside agencies)</p>	<p>This level of the continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals and support services (as appropriate) and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures</li> <li>• Parent and pupil interviews</li> <li>• Functional assessment</li> <li>• Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability, social, emotional and behavioural functioning, adaptive functioning etc</li> </ul> <p>With parental consent, the class teacher may request involvement of appropriate external professionals eg, Educational psychologists, clinical psychologists, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists. Data generated from this process is used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress.</p> <p><b>Educational psychologists ie NEPS</b>, work in collaboration with teachers and parents in clarifying problems, through consultation and further joint assessment. They collaborate with teachers in planning and monitoring interventions which take account of the pupil's strengths and address identified needs.</p> <p>A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.</p>
--	---

### Meeting Children's Diverse Learning Needs

We take into account the different backgrounds, experiences, interests and strengths that influence the way in which children learn when we plan our approaches to teaching and learning. In planning our support, the 'Planning Template' outlining the 6 point action plan below will be utilised.

### Planning Template to Guide the Allocation of Additional Teaching Supports for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (Primary Guidelines, P19-20)

<p>Action 1: Identification of pupils with special educational needs</p>	<p>Review existing information on pupils' needs, using school-based data and any information from parents and external professionals. Engage in additional screening and data gathering as required, using informal and formal assessment approaches (for example, teacher observations, information on</p>
--	---

	<p>social and emotional competence, standardised tests, diagnostic tests).</p> <p>Identify all pupils with special educational needs in the school. Match their needs to the appropriate level on the Continuum of Support.</p>
Action 2: Setting targets	Based on individual needs, set clear learning targets for each pupil at each level of the continuum of support.
Action 3: Planning teaching methods and approaches	Identify the level and type of intervention required to meet targets for each pupil on the continuum of support. Schools should consider methodologies best suited to promoting meaningful inclusion such as differentiation, heterogeneous grouping, team-teaching and small group teaching. They should also be mindful that the interventions and supports that they are using are evidence-informed.
Action 4: Organising early intervention and prevention programmes	Based on identified needs, choose evidence-informed early intervention/prevention programmes to address concerns. Identify time needed and staffing commitment required.
Action 5: Organising and deploying special education teaching resources	<p>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. Agree which teacher(s) will cater for these groups/individuals and when and where the teaching will take place.</p> <p>Be mindful of the requirement that pupils with the greatest level of need should receive the greatest level of support from teachers with relevant expertise.</p>
Action 6: Tracking, recording and reviewing progress	<p>Establish a tracking and recording system, to ensure that the progress of all pupils in meeting their identified targets is monitored:</p> <p>At whole-school and classroom support level by all teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the school support and school support plus levels by class teachers and special education teachers.</li> </ul>

## Diagnostic Assessment

Following interpretation of the standardised tests, pupils may be selected for diagnostic assessment. This involves consultation between the class teacher and support teacher. From parents, written consent is sought before administration of diagnostic tests. Tests administered may include some of the following: (this is not an exhaustive list)

### Diagnostic Assessment Resources

Seicliosta na Naíonáin

Micra T

Drumcondra tests

Non Verbal reasoning

P.A.T checklist

NRIT – non reading intelligence test

Dolch Sight Vocabulary 220 words

100 most frequently used words in reading

100 most frequently used words in spelling

Basic Phonics Skills Tests (BPST-11)

MALT: Mathematics Assessment for Learning and Teaching

Schonnell Spelling test

**The following areas of Literacy and Numeracy may also be tested informally and formally:**

**Emergent Literacy Stage**

1. Print awareness
2. Print conventions.
3. Phonemic awareness and ability to rhyme word
4. Letter identification
5. Knowledge of letter sounds
6. Word recognition
7. Visual discrimination
8. Word identification skills
9. Spelling
10. Writing
11. Auditory Skills – sequencing and discrimination

**Beyond Early Literacy Stage**

1. Reading fluency
2. Sentence and passage comprehension
3. Word recognition
4. Vocabulary
5. Word identification skills
6. Miscue analysis
7. Spelling
8. Oral language proficiency i.e. listening skills, comprehension, and expressive language
9. Motivation to learn
10. Social adjustment



## **Mathematics**

Diagnostic Assessment of Mathematics will include some or all of the following depending on the pupil's individual needs:

- Conservation of number
  - Understanding of math's concepts
  - Number sense
  - Understanding and ability to use the language of math's
  - Computation skills
  - Ability to use number in realistic situations
  - Problem solving strategies
  - Recall of number facts
  - Mathematical reasoning skills
- 
- Review and assessment dates are documented.

## ***Communication***

### **Liaising with Parents/Guardians.**

Consultation with parents prior to diagnostic assessment is standard practice and further discussion regarding the results is necessary to ascertain the areas needing attention and implementation of support plans and Individual Education Plans.. Guidance can also be given prior to testing to parents/guardians by the support teacher. This may include information/discussion sessions on such topics as:

1. The purpose and procedures of the school support teaching service.
2. Paired reading programme.
3. Developing children's oral reading language.
4. Motivating children to read more.
5. Creating a home environment in which literacy can thrive.
6. Helping children with homework.
7. Selecting books that interest children.
8. Developing children's reasoning and problem solving abilities.
9. Developing children's mathematical knowledge.

Parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if any difficulties arise during an instructional term and to attend any meetings at the end of an instructional term to review their children's progress in achieving learning targets.

If it is decided that support teaching is to continue parents are invited to discuss revised learning targets and activities.

### **Overcoming Potential Barriers to Learning and Assessment for Individuals and Groups of Children**

We recognise that a minority of children will have particular learning and assessment requirements that will create barriers to learning. If we do not address them through special arrangements. Our SEN policy envisages a whole school approach that takes into account the roles of the Board of Management, the Principal, class teacher, special education teacher and the parents and pupils.

In attempting to achieve the above objectives the BoM, principal and staff will take all reasonable steps within the limits of the resources available to fulfil the requirements outlined in this policy document.

### **Board of Management**

The BoM will fulfil its statutory duties towards pupils with special educational needs. It will ensure that the provision required is an integral part of the school development plan. Members will be knowledgeable about the school's SEN provision – funding, equipment and personnel. The BoM:

- Oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on support for children with extra needs
- Provides adequate class accommodation and teaching resources
- Provides a secure facility for storage of records.

### **Principal**

The principal has overall responsibility for the day-to-day management of provision. He will work closely with the SEN co-ordinator and will keep the BoM informed about the working of this policy. It will be the role of the principal in collaboration with the SEN co-ordinator to:

- Develop inclusive whole-school policies and monitor their implementation
- 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

### **Special Needs Co-ordinator**

The Special Needs Co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy
- Co-ordinating provision for children with special educational needs

- Organises the timetable for support teaching
- Liaising with and advising fellow teachers and contributing to in-service training of staff
- Liaising with and advising SNAs with regard to supporting children with special needs
- Liaising with parents of children with special needs
- Monitoring and evaluating SEN provision
- Keeps a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching
- Facilitating planning for class teacher with support teacher
- Supports the implementation of a tracking system at a whole-school level to monitor the progress of children who avail of additional support
- Keeps teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedures to be followed for initial referrals
- Advises parents on procedures for availing of special needs services
- Selects children for psychological assessment in consultation with class and support teachers and with our NEPS psychologist
- The principal liaises with external agencies such as NEPS to arrange assessments of children with SEN
- Liaises with Principal and SENO regarding all aspects of special education provision
- Stores confidential information (Psychological Assessment Reports etc.) regarding SEN children and shares same with principal, class teachers, support teachers, SNAs, other agencies where appropriate.
- Participates in and or oversees the drafting of IEPs, IPLPs and classroom support plans

### **The Role of the Class Teacher**

Effective teaching and learning is critically important for all pupils, and especially for those with special educational needs. Meaningful inclusion implies that all pupils are taught in stimulating and supportive classroom environments where they are respected and valued. Mainstream class teachers have first-line responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes. Accordingly, classroom teachers should ensure that they plan their lessons carefully to address the diverse needs within the classroom. This will include adapting their teaching approaches for some pupils whose individual progress, application, motivation, communication, behaviour or interaction with peers are causes for concern. This may require targeted interventions to develop relevant adaptive skills related to these needs. All mainstream class teachers will implement teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. These include:

- Co-operative teaching and learning within mainstream classrooms
- Collaborative problem-solving activities
- Heterogeneous group work
- Differentiation
- Interventions to promote social and emotional competence
- Embedding Information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching, learning and assessment

Every pupil needs to be taught a broad and balanced curriculum that is appropriate to his/her developmental level. Pupils' levels of interest, attention, concentration and persistence should be gradually developed, extended and rewarded, using appropriate teaching strategies. To cater for the range of learning needs in any class, mainstream class teachers will regularly need to differentiate their lessons. This can be achieved by:

- Varying the level, structure, mode of instruction and pace of lessons to meet individual needs
- Adapting lessons to take account of pupils' interests
- Matching tasks to pupils' abilities and needs
- Adapting and utilising resources, including the use of technology
- Aspiring towards suitably challenging learning outcomes and assessing accordingly

Teachers can make lessons accessible to a broad range of pupils through the use of a variety of appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies, including active learning, small-group tuition, individual teaching, and scaffolded instruction. This may also require environmental adaptations to promote curricular access.

### **Standardised Testing**

From Junior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.

<b>Class</b>	<b>May Testing</b>
Junior Infants	Seicliosta na Naíonáin
Senior Infants	Drumcondra Gaeilge
First Class	Drumcondra Irish, English (1st), Sigma T
Second Class	Drumcondra Irish, English(2nd), Sigma T
Third Class	Drumcondra Irish, English(3rd), Sigma T
Fourth Class	Drumcondra Irish, English(4th), Sigma T
Fifth Class	Drumcondra Irish, English(5th), Sigma T
Sixth Class	Drumcondra Irish, English (6 <sup>th</sup> ).Sigma T

### **The Role of the Special Education Teacher**

Special education teachers should be familiar with a wide range of teaching approaches, methodologies and resources to cater for particular learning styles and to meet a variety of needs. Teaching approaches will include a combination of team-teaching/ in class initiatives, co-operative teaching, early intervention and small group or individual support. Depending on the learning needs identified, a pupil with special educational needs may be supported at classroom level, or through mainstream classroom placement with additional teaching delivered through in-class or withdrawal support models.

Some pupils with more complex and enduring needs may require specific methodologies, teaching approaches and/or learning activities. Such interventions should be based on careful identification of strengths and needs, including multi-disciplinary assessment when necessary.

The type of support offered depends on the child's individual needs and takes the form of:

- curriculum support
- life and/or social skills training
- physical training/gross motor development
- speech training/communication and/or language development
- behaviour modification programmes
- assistance with sensory modulation
- development of anger management strategies
- a combination of some/all of the above

Special education teachers, in consultation with class teachers, should plan their interventions carefully to address pupils' priority learning needs and to achieve the targets identified in the relevant continuum of support plan. Short-term planning should reflect the support plan targets and should break down the development of skills and content into small incremental steps to address each pupil's specific needs on a weekly basis. Outcomes for pupils should be routinely assessed, recorded and used to review progress. These outcomes should also be used to inform the targets for the next phase of intervention.

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of the special educational needs provision available in the school. Our school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school.

### **Parental Involvement**

Good parental engagement is a critical factor in enhancing outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. Parental engagement is enhanced when parents are consulted in relation to their children's needs and strengths, on the supports and strategies being developed to support their children, and when they are involved in regular reviews of progress. The Continuum of Support process and use of the Student Support File provide valuable opportunities to engage with parents and to build a collaborative approach to identifying and responding to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. There may also be opportunities for parents to work collaboratively with the school through initiatives such as paired reading

In addition to consultation around the individual needs of their child, parents also value receiving good information on the nature and type of the special educational needs provision available in the school. Our school will consult with parents when developing and reviewing policies relating to the education of children with special educational needs. This helps to ensure that parents understand the school's approaches and better enables them to support their children in transitioning through the school.

The Parents/Guardians of the pupils of Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg can prepare for and support the work of the school by:

- Supervising, assisting with, showing interest in and signing homework.
- Reading and telling stories to their child/children.
- Listening to and giving supportive feedback on oral reading.
- Where their child is in receipt of supplementary teaching, implementing suggested home-based activities and discussing the outcomes with the child's teachers.
- Talking positively about school and school work.
- Keeping the class teacher informed of any home factors which may be affecting their child's progress.
- Participating in activities organised by the school that are designed to increase the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- Helping children to develop their organisational skills.
- Helping children to look after school books and other resources which are loaned to the children for use at home.
- Supporting programmes and initiatives implemented by the school.

## **Pupil Input**

It is important for the students to have an input into their own learning plan and its review. By doing so they can:

- become more independent as learners;
- become aware of different learning styles;
- become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses or needs;
- enjoy success and evaluate their progress;
- develop ownership of the skills and strategies taught.

## **Enrolment**

The school aims to meet the needs of any child whom the parent wishes to register at the school as long as a place is available and the admission criteria are fulfilled. The Ed. For Persons with Disabilities Act 2004 states that 'A child is entitled to attend the school which is most suited to his or her overall needs'.

Parents are required to notify the school of their child's special needs in advance of enrolment. The Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical or psychological report. No child will be refused admission solely on the grounds that s/he has SEN except where the provision required is incompatible with that available in our school.

# **Special Classes for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.**

Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg has as part of its community a special unit for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The unit consists of two classes which caters for six children each. Each class has one class teacher and two Special Needs Assistants. The unit has a Multi-Sensory Room, a shared area and Playground. Pupils will integrate into the mainstream class play areas under the supervision of a Special Needs Assistant.

Our class for younger pupils is called Lios na nÓg and our class for older pupils is called Tír na nÓg.

The unit aims to offer an Autism specific learning environment within a mainstream school. This type of educational setting facilitates optimum inclusion as part of the school community with access to mainstream activities as appropriate.

The classrooms are physically structured in accordance with the TEACCH Model, with specific areas for individual learning, group work and lunch. The rooms are equipped with a variety of equipment to develop fine and gross motor skills, aid sensory processing and provide exercises for stimulation and preparation for learning.

The multi-sensory room consists of fibre-optic lights, bubble tube, projector, mirrors, a variety of sensory equipment and mood music. This room may be used to stimulate a child or help a child to self-regulate..

## **Key Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Principal**

- ; • Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the policy in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children
- Monitor the implementation of the policy on an ongoing basis
- Keep relevant teachers informed about the external assessment services that are available and the procedure to be followed in relation to referrals within the ASD setting
- Support teachers to increase their knowledge and skills in the area of ASD
- Being a member of the admissions team
- Upholding the Code of Behaviour of the school, where appropriate
- Ensure that staff have received the appropriate training in conjunction with the Safeguarding Staff Safeguarding Children Policy.

### **ASD class teacher**

- Being the main point of contact for the child's parents/guardians.

- Initiate, update and review a pupil support file for each student.
- Involving parents in the educational process, eg. Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Home-School Communication Diaries, etc.
- Preparing a new pupil's IEP in the first term of the school year in consultation with parents, and in liaison with other staff working with the child.
- Initiating a review of that IEP each term and organising venue, date and time to consult with parents, mainstream class teacher and SNAs
- Planning and implementing educational provision for children enrolled in the multiclass. IEPs being used as long-term planning and fortnightly plans for short-term planning to enable progression over time
- Co-ordinating the supporting work of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) on an ongoing basis
- Working with the mainstream class teacher to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate
- Working with the mainstream class teacher to identify and implement accommodations that the child with ASD may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate
- Upholding the Code of Behaviour of the school, where appropriate
- Ensure that all staff have received the appropriate training in conjunction with the Safeguarding Staff Safeguarding Children Policy

### **Mainstream class teacher**

- Working with the multi-class teacher to identify regular opportunities for integration or reverse integration, where appropriate
- Working with the ASD teacher and SNAs to implement accommodations that the child with ASD may need to be successful in the mainstream classroom, where appropriate
- Providing input, where appropriate, during the review stages of the IEPs and attending IEP review meetings, where possible The roles and responsibilities of the Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) include;
- Assisting with the care/safety/supervision needs of the children – in the classrooms and around the school, on the playground and on school trips
- Assisting with behavioural management programmes
- Guiding the child through tasks and activities designed by the ASD teacher or the mainstream class teacher
- Data collection/reporting on progress as determined by the ASD teacher or Principal
- Providing special assistance to children as necessary



- Preparing materials/resources for the children, under the guidance of the ASD teacher or the mainstream class teacher
- Providing input, where appropriate, during the review stages of the IEPs and attending IEP review meetings, where possible

### **Integration and Inclusion**

Integration with typically developing peers in inclusive mainstream classroom environments, in so far as possible, is the school's aim. The nature of all integration shall be determined by the ASD class teacher following reviews at appropriate intervals and in consultation with the parents, mainstream class teacher, Principal and SNAs.

"Partial Integration" will take the form of contact during specific situations or curricular areas, where particular skills and interests and/or learning can be advanced.

"Increasing Integration" will be put in place for children who are successful in the integrated setting. Success criteria will be based on the level of meaningful learning and functioning within the setting.

"Reverse Integration" will be put in place for children where integration in the integrated setting is not appropriate. It can be used as a stepping stone to and/or in conjunction with Partial Integration. The focus of "Reverse Integration" will be on social and play skills.

The minimum level of integration and inclusion for all pupils, where appropriate, will include some lunch times, some group activities and some playground breaks.

### **Approaches to Teaching and Learning**

The children will access a curriculum based on the Primary School Curriculum (1999) that is matched to their needs and capabilities, through carefully planned IEPs and through the use of differentiation strategies. Subject areas include; English, Maths, Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Music, Visual Arts, Drama, Physical Education and Ethical Education. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessments Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities will be used to augment the implementation of the curriculum.

Children who have a recommendation of education in an ASD class setting do not necessarily qualify for an exemption from Gaeilge. An exemption must be recommended by a psychologist or a speech & language therapist. This exemption must be applied for through the principal and NEPs. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that their child has the appropriate exemption, if necessary.

An eclectic approach to teaching shall be used within the ASD classes, that is, a range of approaches (including those used in the school's mainstream classes) shall be employed, based on the individual needs of the children.

The main approaches are as follows, but are not limited to; play, language through play, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication – Handicapped Children (TEACCH), Contemporary ABA, Intensive Interaction & Relationship Development, Floortime, Lámh, Language through Colour and Social Stories, Attention Autism, Colourful Semantics.

We will follow the recommendations from the educational reports.

The assessment tools in use in the multi-classes are, but are not limited to; Sigma, Micra, checklists, Non verbal if the pupils are able.

The implementation of the primary school curriculum will be enhanced through a programme of trips to local places, designed to help further prepare the children for successful living in our community (playground visits, coffee shop, shopping tasks, post office, swimming, etc.). Typically developing peers may also participate in elements of this programme.

The school may run a July Education Programme

This programme will be funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The principal and teachers involved in the delivery of the programme

### **Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

The BOM will support the accessing of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by staff. Relevant specialist training is accessed via the Special Education Support Service (SESS).

A list of other courses available from the SESS are displayed on the SESS website, <http://www.sess.ie/professional-development/calendar/asd>

### **The Role of Outside Services**

Support from outside services such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), etc., is available to the children and parents of the ASD classes. However, due to a lack of resources and long waiting lists these resources are extremely limited.

No HSE therapies, such as Occupational Therapy or Speech & Language Therapy are provided at the school. However, where a child has access to such supports in a local clinic, health centre or in a private capacity, those professionals will liaise with the ASD teachers and/or visit the school from time to time.

**Equipment and Resources** The children in the ASD classes will have access to equipment and resources which are recommended in their psychological reports, occupational therapy reports and speech & language therapy reports, where possible. When a recommendation is made for a child for a specific piece of equipment such as a sit and lean cushion, a slant board, etc. the parents of the child may be requested to pay for the equipment and as such it is the property of the child. Resources such as therapy, therapabands, fine motor equipment and gross motor equipment will be, where possible, provided by the school. Children in the ASD-classes will have access the Sensory Room when needed. Resources and Assessment Kits, and Board Maker CD-ROM, will remain in the multi-class classrooms and can be loaned to resource teachers and mainstream teachers, where needed

### **Resources**

Gaelscoil Thulach na nÓg is a well-resourced school, which constantly monitors and updates its resources. I.T. provision is good and is updated regularly.

---

# Whole School Strategies to minimise learning difficulties

The teacher puts the classroom and the school within the wider context to the pupils lives. The complex physiological, social and emotional needs children bring to school are considered in addition to their learning needs within school.

The following factors are considered:

- Environment/Physical Conditions
- Social factors/Relationships
- Teaching and Learning: Methods, Materials and Procedures
- Classroom Activity
- Rules/Rewards/Consequences
- School Environment.

*(Neps Educational Psychological Services: Continuum of Support Resource Pack )*

As a means of preventing the occurrence of learning difficulties, as far as possible, the following **Whole School strategies are being implemented:**

Early intervention / in class support

- The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to language development e.g. phonological awareness;
  - The development and implementation of an agreed whole school approach to the Maths programme e.g. Maths language;
  - Promotion of parental involvement through their attendance at induction meetings for parents of incoming Junior Infants;
  - Implementation of whole-school parent involvement programmes that focus on developing childrens oral language skills, sharing books with children and developing their early Mathematical skills
  - Whole school promotion of Reading for Pleasure .... Record in journals, book review
  - Genre Writing whole school programme / first steps
  - Implementation of a paired reading programmes./ PM readers
  - Guided Reading
  - Print rich environment ,
  - Shared/paired reading ,
  - Story time, Library time, DEAR time, Book Week, Book Fair, Reading buddies, Word games, Class library, visiting authors,
  - Access to Literacy apps on school ipads and at home
  - Ongoing observation and assessment of language, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in the infant classes to facilitate early identification of possible learning difficulties
  - Formal and informal Parent/Teacher meetings.
- 
- Class-based early intervention by the class teacher resulting in provision of
  - additional support; and

- Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by Class Teacher.
- Implementation of social skills programmes
- Implementation of NEPS programmes: Fun Friends and Friends for Life.

## **Early Intervention Programme**

Prevention Programme for Senior Infants
Phonemic awareness / P.A.T programme/ Sounds Abound
In class Literacy/ Mata
Letter recognition
Sequencing of alphabet / days of the week
Sight vocabulary
Supporting class reading
Handwriting skills
7 aspects oral language development through use of Big Books
Listening, naming, categorizing, describing, denoting position, sequencing, reasoning and planning, retelling a story
Other areas as recommended by class teacher depending on individual needs of particular group.

- Junior Infant pupils are screened using teacher observation;
- information is elicited from enrolment forms which may indicate difficulties at a later stage eg slow to reach recognised milestones, language acquisition and development, attending speech therapy prior to starting school

### **Early Intervention**

Checklists and teacher observation is used to determine where interventions are needed. A plan and a review date is decided by the classroom teacher and the support teacher.

### **Developing Listening Skills:**

Promoting a classroom environment where children listen to others, do not interrupt the speaker and wait their turn; Circle time, Listening games/activities; Listening Programmes; Listening to music.

**Observation and/or assessment:**

Observation: Methods in use- personal checklists, record sheet for each child, Shared observation ( 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion), listening to reading, General correction of homework.

Recording observation-Checklists, Personal records, reading records, paired reading, Teachers own observation.

Share concerns with: - Last year's/ next year's teacher, similar level teacher, parents, L/S teacher, SEN co-ordinator

**Stages of Assessment and Provision**

Access to the school's broad and balanced curriculum is achieved for most children by differentiation of class work by the class teacher. When a class teacher, or home school liaison teacher, identifies a child with SEN the class teacher consults with the SEN coordinator and provides interventions that are ADDITIONAL TO or DIFFERENT FROM those provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum. The first line of responsibility for the progress of all pupils in the class lies with the class teacher. However, as most of our support is in-class the stages are less defined than in situations where learning support is delivered by withdrawal.