

GLOUNAGUILLAGH NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Special Educational Needs Policy Learning Support Policy

Introduction

Glounaguillagh N.S. is co-educational primary school. It is an 'ordinary' mainstream primary school, catering for a full cross section of children. The purpose of this SEN policy is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other interested parties on the provision of effective learning support to pupils experiencing low achievement and / or learning difficulties, as well as to fulfil our obligations under the Education Act 1998.

The school currently has the following provisions to cater for children with Special Educational Needs:

- One Learning Support Teacher
- 1 part time Resource Teachers for children with Special Educational Needs
- 1 Special Needs Assistants.

Access to and participation in the above facilities is governed by the following policies:

- Learning Support Policy
- Resource Teaching Policy
- Policy on the Integration of Children with Special Educational and/or Physical Needs

Implementation and Review

The implementation of this Policy will commence in September 2016. It will be reviewed at the end of every third school year, or as circumstances may warrant.

Communication

This policy will be available on our school web site. All school policies will also be disseminated to parents through the medium of the school newsletter.

The principal aim of Learning Support is to optimise the teaching and learning process so as to enable pupils with learning difficulties to achieve adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy before leaving primary school.

Specific Objectives of Learning Support

Through the implementation of this policy we strive to:

- ❑ Facilitate pupils to participate in the full curriculum for their class level
- ❑ Develop positive self-esteem and positive attitudes to school and learning
- ❑ Enable pupils to monitor their own learning and become independent learners within their own ability
- ❑ Involve parents in supporting their children's learning
- ❑ Promote collaboration among teachers.

Guiding principles

The school recognises that effective learning programmes are based on the following principles:

- ❑ Effective whole-school policies
- ❑ Whole school involvement
- ❑ Prevention of failure at infant level
- ❑ Provision of intensive early intervention up to and including second class
- ❑ Direction of resources towards pupils in greatest need.

Prevention Strategies

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

- ❑ The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to languages development, e.g. phonological awareness, and to the teaching of other aspects of English
- ❑ Delay in introducing the formal process of reading as per the Revised Curriculum
- ❑ The development and implementation of agreed whole school approaches to the teaching of aspects of Maths.
- ❑ Promotion of parental understanding and involvement through their attendance at an induction meeting for the parents of incoming Junior Infants, the arrangement of formal and informal Parent-Teacher Meetings, and provision of regular school newsletter, as well as ongoing collaboration with Parents' Association
- ❑ Class based early intervention by the Learning Support Teacher from Infants to Rang 4 resulting in the provision of additional individualised support. In JI this will be primarily focused at identification of pupils who may be in need of LS. These children will begin Early Intervention in Senior Infants.
- ❑ Ongoing observation and assessment of pupils by the Class Teacher.

Selection of Pupils for Learning Support

- ❑ The principle of Early Intervention applies, therefore pupils from Senior Infants to Second Class are given priority in the allocation of Learning Support.
- ❑ In Junior infants pupils are screened using teacher observation.
- ❑ From Senior Infants upwards, all pupils are screened annually, using appropriate standardised tests.
- ❑ Priority for Learning Support is given to those pupils who perform at or below the 12th Percentile, excluding in the main pupils who receive Resource Teaching.
- ❑ In the case of pupils performing at or below the 12th percentile, the screening process is followed by a consultative meeting between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher and the parents concerning the pupil's performance, and supplementary teaching is offered
- ❑ In the allocation of places for Learning Support, the following are prioritised:
 1. Senior Infants identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in literacy
 2. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12th percentile in literacy
 3. Children from Rang 3-Rang 6 at or below the 12th percentile in literacy
 4. Senior Infants, identified by the Class Teacher, through Teacher Observation and/or MIST or other screening instruments, as having difficulty in numeracy
 5. Children from Rang 1 and Rang 2, at or below the 12th percentile in numeracy
 6. Children from Rang 3 and Rang 4, at or below the 12th percentile in numeracy

7. In class support for children presenting at 12th to 20th percentile in literacy and numeracy in all classes up to Rang 4.
8. If children are achieving higher than these percentiles but finding it difficult to keep up with the class level then they will be considered for Learning Support.

Provision of Supplementary Teaching

- ❑ The primary work of the Learning Support Teachers is the provision of supplementary teaching to the pupils identified above
- ❑ The school year will be divided into 2 Instructional Terms of approximately 20 weeks each.
- ❑ The maximum case load at any one time shall be 30 pupils
- ❑ One to one teaching may be provided where small group teaching has not been effective.
- ❑ Classes will be intensive in terms of frequency
- ❑ A system of withdrawal and/or in-class support will operate in response to the needs of the individual pupil
- ❑ The Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher will meet to devise an Individual Profile and Learning Programme (IPLP) or Group Education Plan (GEP), in consultation with the Principal and parents. The pupil involved can also contribute to setting their own short-term targets
- ❑ If a pupil is receiving support from a Resource Teacher in English / Maths, s/he will not normally be provided with supplementary teaching from the Learning Support Teacher as well.
- ❑ If the pupil is in receipt of support from a Resource Teacher to address other needs, e.g. behavioural problems, sensory difficulty, it may be appropriate for the Learning Support Teacher to provide supplementary teaching as well
- ❑ The Learning Support Teachers will maintain the following documentation in individualised files:
 1. Individual Profile and Learning programme
 2. Short term planning and programme record
 3. Other records and tests.
 4. Reading analysis records.
 5. Selected spelling and Reading Tests

Individual Learning Plan / Group Education Plan

The Individual Learning Plan / Group Education Plan will be in accordance with the pro-forma as advised in the Learning Support Guidelines, issued by the DES in 2000.

The plan will address the pupils' full range of needs and will include:

- ❑ Details from the Class Teacher
- ❑ Assessment Results
- ❑ Other relevant information, e.g. reports from other agencies
- ❑ Learning strengths and attainments
- ❑ Priority Learning Needs
- ❑ Learning Targets
- ❑ Class based Learning Activities
- ❑ Supplementary support activities to include ICT
- ❑ Home Support Activities.

Each plan will be monitored through teacher observation; the keeping of planning and progress records and through the pupil's own feedback.

A detailed review will take place at the end of each Instructional Term. The Learning Support Teacher and/or the Class Teacher will meet the parents at the beginning of the year. If a further meeting is necessary at the beginning of the second term then this will be organised.

Timetabling

- ❑ The provision of Learning Support is in addition to the regular class teaching in English and Maths
- ❑ Effort is made to ensure that pupils do not miss out on the same curricular each time they attend Learning Support. A flexible approach to timetabling is adopted by the Class Teacher, though class disruption must be minimised.
- ❑ The provision of Learning Support may include withdrawal of pupils from their classroom and/or in-class tuition
- ❑ In class support, if appropriate, will be jointly designed and monitored by the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher.

Provision of Resources

- ❑ Resources for the provision of Learning Support include a variety of textbooks, library books and ancillary materials and oral language development materials. A variety of testing materials are also in use which include standardised, diagnostic, screening, reading experience, reading attainment, phonological awareness and Maths attainment.
- ❑ Following consultation between the Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Class Teacher, funding for materials may be provided from the learning support Grant, materials Grant, and/or funding that may be available through the Board of Management
- ❑ Learning Support resources will be primarily be used in the learning Support Room. These resources may be made available to Class Teachers following consultation with the Learning Support Teacher.

Continuing and Discontinuing Supplementary Teaching

- ❑ Following the end of Instructional Term review as detailed above, a decision is made to continue/discontinue the provision of Supplementary Teaching.
- ❑ The decision making process involves consultation between the Class Teacher, the Learning Support Teacher, and the pupil's parents, and account is also taken of the overall Learning Support demands in the school.
- ❑ The criteria on which the decision will be made include:
 1. A consideration as to whether the pupil has achieved some/all of the learning targets set
 2. A consideration as to whether the pupil will be able to cope independently/semi independently in the classroom learning context
- ❑ A decision to continue the provision of supplementary teaching will result in a revision of the pupil's IPLP. The teacher will also assess if they feel the child will be able to cope in class without the additional support.

Referral to out of School Agencies

- ❑ The Learning Support Teacher co-ordinates the referral of pupils to outside agencies, e.g. Educational Psychologist
- ❑ The Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher meet with the parents to discuss the need for the referral and to seek consent
- ❑ The Class Teacher completes the necessary referral form in consultation with the appropriate school personnel.
- ❑ The external professional visits the school to meet with the pupil, parents, principal, Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher as appropriate, and the assessment is conducted
- ❑ This is followed by a return visit at which findings are discussed, recommendations are considered and an appropriate response is agreed.
- ❑ Where concern arises regarding the manner of speed of the follow-through post assessment, such concern is pursued by the Principal with the out of school agency concerned.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Learning Support is a collaborative responsibility shared by all partners in the learning experiences. It is important that all partners contribute in the planning and implementation of our school plan on learning support.

Board of Management

The role of the Board of Management is to:

- ❑ Oversee the development, implementation and review of the provision of Learning Support in the school
- ❑ Ensure adequate classroom accommodation and teaching resources are provided for the Learning Support Teachers
- ❑ Provide a secure facility for storage or records in relation to pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- ❑ Budget for ongoing support for Professional Development in Learning Support for staff.

Principal

The role of the principal is to:

- ❑ Assume overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's policy on Learning Support in co-operation with the Board of Management, Teachers, parents and children
- ❑ Work with teachers and parents in the development of the school plan on learning support in the context of Special Needs Education
- ❑ Monitor the implementation of the school plan on Learning Support on an ongoing basis
- ❑ Monitor the selection of pupils for supplementary teaching, ensuring that this service is focused on the pupils with lowest levels of achievement
- ❑ Assume direct responsibility for co-ordination learning support in the context of Special Needs Services
- ❑ Oversee the implementation of a whole-school assessment and screening programme to identify pupils with very low achievement and learning difficulties so that these pupils can be provided with the support they need
- ❑ Keep teachers informed about the external assessment service that are available and the procedure to be followed in initiation referrals
- ❑ Help teachers increase their knowledge and skills in the area of learning support.

Class Teacher

The class teacher has primary responsibility for the progress of all pupils in his/her class, including those selected for supplementary teaching. In supporting the development and implementation of the school plan on Learning Support, the class teacher should:

- ❑ Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils and to the greatest extent possible prevent the emergence of learning difficulties
- ❑ Implement the school policies on screening and selecting pupils for supplementary teaching in English and Maths by co-operating and assisting with the administration and scoring of appropriate screening measures
- ❑ For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to collaborate with the Learning Support Teacher in the development of an individual profile and learning programme by identifying appropriate learning targets and by organising classroom activities to achieve these targets
- ❑ For each pupil who is in receipt of supplementary teaching, to adjust the classroom programmes in line with the agreed learning targets and activities
- ❑ Weekly plan of work in English and Maths to be provided to the Learning Support Teacher in advance.

With regard to teaching pupils with low achievement, the following general approaches and methods are recommended:

- ❑ Such children should be prioritised when accessing information from previous class teacher
- ❑ Priority when establishing parental contact
- ❑ Group teaching
- ❑ Modify presentation and questioning techniques to maximise the involvement of pupils with low achievement in class activities
- ❑ Placing emphasis on oral language development across the curriculum
- ❑ Providing pupils with extra tutoring in the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy
- ❑ Setting learning targets at an appropriate level
- ❑ Providing learning activities and material which are suitably challenging but which also ensure success and progress
- ❑ Carrying out error analyses of a pupil's work to pinpoint specific areas of difficulty
- ❑ Setting up 'buddy systems' in class (high achievers collaboratively working with low achievers, e.g. peer tutoring / paired reading)
- ❑ Applying assessments and tests which offer challenge and opportunities for success to children of all levels of achievement.

A key role of successful Learning Support is a very high level of consultation and co-operation between the Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher. Central to this consultation is the development, implementation and review of Individual Profile and Learning Programmes

Learning Support Teacher

The role of the Learning Support Teacher is to:

- ❑ Develop an individual profile and learning programme for each pupil who is selected for supplementary teaching in consultation with the Class Teacher and parents
- ❑ Maintain and plan and progress record or equivalent for each individual or group of pupils in receipt of Learning Support
- ❑ Provide teaching in English and Maths to pupils in the school who experience low achievement, in accordance with the school's selection criteria
- ❑ Contribute to the development of policy on Learning Support at whole school level
- ❑ Provide advice to the Class Teachers in such areas as individual pupils assessment and programme planning, as well as approaches to language development, reading, writing and mathematics for pupils experiencing difficulties
- ❑ Contribute at school level to decision making regarding the purchase of learning resource books and materials to be made available to pupils with learning difficulties in their mainstream classrooms and in the Learning Support room
- ❑ Perform a defined role in co-ordinating the provision of Special Needs and Learning Support services in the school
- ❑ Liaise with external agencies such as psychologist to arrange assessments and special provision for pupils with special needs
- ❑ Maintain a list of pupils who are receiving supplementary teaching and special education support
- ❑ Track the progress of pupils who have discontinued Learning Support.

Parents

The role of parents supporting the Learning Support for their children is vital to its success. Specifically, parents contribute through:

- ❑ Regular communication with the Class Teacher and Learning Support Teacher
- ❑ Creating a home environment where literacy can thrive
- ❑ Fostering positive attitudes about school and learning in the child
- ❑ Participation in shared reading programme
- ❑ Encouraging the child to visit library
- ❑ Developing the child's oral language
- ❑ Developing the child's social mathematics

Communication Strategies

The operation of an effective communication system between all the parties involved in meeting the learning needs of the child is considered essential. The various strands of the system include:

- ❑ Class Teacher and the Learning Support Teacher following a low score on a screening test
- ❑ Principal and/or Learning Support Teacher and/or Class Teacher and parents following a low score on a screening test, including the seeking of approval of further diagnostic assessment and/or provision of supplementary teaching
- ❑ Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and the Class Teacher, through the weekly completion of the *Classroom Work Schedule in English and Maths* and the participation in formal and informal meetings
- ❑ Regular communication between the Learning Support Teacher and parents

Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will result in enhancement of pupils learning in the following ways:

- ❑ Improved standards of academic achievement with the pupil's individual learning programme
- ❑ Enabling the discontinuation of the provision of Learning Support based on positive assessment results
- ❑ Enhanced parental involvement in supporting their child's learning needs
- ❑ Increased opportunities for effective communication between school personnel in relation to pupil's progress
- ❑ Learning Support provision continuously focused on children from Junior Infants to Rang 2.

Resource Teaching Policy

Entitlement to Resource Teaching

When a child continues to experience difficulty and is not making progress above the 12th percentile in literacy and numeracy, the child will normally be referred for psychological assessment, in consultation with parents, and may then be supported by a Resource Teacher.

Pupils who display major behavioural or emotional difficulties may be referred for assessment and may be allocated resource hours.

Children with learning difficulties who are integrated into mainstream education may also be allocated resource time.

Children who have physical difficulties, e.g. deafness, sight impairment, cerebral palsy are usually allocated resource hours.

The Role of the Resource Teacher

The Resource Teacher helps to provide an education which meets the needs and abilities of children assessed as having difficulties. In addition, the Resource Teacher should advise and liaise with other teachers, parents and other professionals in the children's interests. More specifically, the Resource Teacher has responsibility for:

- Developing an individual learning programme for each pupil in consultation with other partners in education
- Assessing and recording the child's needs and progress
- Setting specific, time-related targets for each child and agreeing these with the class teacher and principal
- Direct teaching of the child, either in a separate room or within the mainstream class
- Team teaching when the child concerned will derive benefit from it
- Advising class teachers in regard to adapting the curriculum, teaching strategies, textbooks, ICT and other related matters
- Meeting and advising parents, when necessary, accompanied by the class teacher as necessary
- Meeting with other relevant professionals, in the child's interests, eg psychologist, speech and language therapist, visiting teachers.

Role of Class Teacher, Parents, Principal, Board of Management

The role of all the above in the education of children who have been allocated resource teaching is as in the preceding section, i.e. the section on Learning Support.

Integration of Children with a Disability and/or Special Education Needs in Glounaguillagh N.S.

Enrolment of children with a disability and/or special education need

Application for all children, including children with a disability and/or other special education needs, is governed at all times by the school's current Enrolment Policy. However, the attention of parents of children with a disability and/or other special education needs is also drawn to the following points:

- ❑ Glounaguillagh N.S. Mixed National School is an 'ordinary' mainstream school, and has higher pupil/teacher ratios such as those that apply in 'special' schools
- ❑ In general, the teachers in our school are trained and qualified to teach in mainstream education. They do not, in general, have any Special Education Needs Teacher Training, experience, or Qualifications, such as teachers in special schools have
- ❑ While pupils with special needs can be integrated into a mainstream class, and may be supported by a Special Needs Assistant and Resource teaching, as allowed by the DES, this is not the same as the intensive one to one teaching s/he would enjoy in a special school
- ❑ An ordinary mainstream school does not have ancillary services enjoyed by special schools, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy
- ❑ The school does not currently have facilities specially adapted for pupils with physical disability, although the school is fully committed to the provision of these, should any pupil need same, and subject to funding by the DES
- ❑ A child with special needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will by the nature of such integration experience the normal day to day happenings, determined by the reality of school life, and the existing customs and practices. Every child in the school, including those with a disability and /or special educational needs is bound by school policies both in existence and those developed from time to time by the Staff and Board of Management. The school cannot offer any additional tuition, support and supervision beyond that which is offered to any other pupil in the school, at times other than when the school is in operation during the normal school year. The Class Teacher, Resource Teacher (if any) and Special Needs Assistant (if any) will periodically be required to participate at Staff Development and Curriculum Training Courses, Such professional development events take place within the existing school year, and all the children, including pupils with a disability and/or special educational needs are in the care of their parents at the times. Such extraordinary closures will be notified to parents of all pupils through the medium of the school newsletter, Eolas, as well as through regular notices to parents.
- ❑ A child with a disability and/or special educational needs integrated into an ordinary mainstream class will not have any separate or additional provisions put into place from his peers in the event of staff illness, absences or whole school events such as school visits, parish liturgy etc
- ❑ From year to year the allocation of teachers to classes is focused on the needs of the whole school, and consequently the school cannot guarantee long term continuity or predictability in personnel.

Notwithstanding the above points, the school is committed to providing the best possible educational service to pupils with a disability/ special educational needs. To ensure this, we require:

- ❑ A close level of co-operation between parents, the Class Teacher, and any other school personnel assigned to support the child.
- ❑ To enable us to provide the best services for the pupil, and to access any additional support/s that may be available, we require parents to supply the school with copies of the

most recent psychological and medical reports prior to enrolment. These will be treated in the utmost confidence at all times

- ❑ Copies of all relevant assessments and reports should be supplied to the school as these become available, on an ongoing basis
- ❑ An assurance from parents that they understand that our responsibility as a school is primarily to ALL the children in our care, and that therefore if it becomes apparent to either/both the teachers and parents that the integration of an individual child with a disability and/or special educational needs is having an ongoing detrimental effect on the education of the other children in the class or school, the Board of Management reserves the right to review the enrolment of the individual child.

Educational Provision for Overseas Children

Introduction

Glounaguillagh National School welcomes pupils of all nationalities and cultures. This document sets out our policy in relation to the enrolment and education of these children.

Principles

- Our school supports the principle of inclusiveness
- Our school respects the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life of all its pupils
- All children have an equal right to education. In order to fulfil this right, differences will be respected and valued in our school.
- Our school will be pro-active in challenging racism
- Our school is committed to the principle of inter-culturalism, and seeks to actively promote an environment in which cultural differences can be explored and respected, where pupils can learn from each other, and where cooperative learning activities are employed across the curriculum.

Enrolment of Overseas Pupils

- The school's Enrolment Policy governs enrolment of all pupils.
- The enrolment procedure for non-national pupils is exactly the same as that for Irish pupils
- Overseas children are welcome to enrol in our school, provided there is a place in the appropriate class, in line with our enrolment policy
- Parents of overseas children will be afforded help in completion of enrolment documentation, should they require it
- Every effort will be made to create a warm and welcoming environment for overseas parents who approach the school to enrol their children.

Education of Overseas Pupils

- Overseas pupils will be placed in an age appropriate class as far as possible
- Every effort will be made to help the pupils to settle socially in the class, and a 'buddy' will be appointed to help all new pupils to settle in. Every effort will be made by all school personnel to help the child settle in his/her new environment
- The child will not be required to study Religion, should the child be non – Catholic. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Religion time
- In general, as per Circular 12/96, if English is not the first language of the child, s/he may qualify for exemption from the study of Irish, and the school will complete the necessary documentation to obtain this exemption. However, for organisational reasons, the child may be required to remain in his/her class during Irish time
- Overseas children will not be excluded from school tours and outings for financial reasons
- While we recognise that all new pupils need time to settle in and adjust, we require all pupils to adhere to the school's Code of Behaviour, in the interest of all. Overseas children enjoy the same rights and privileges, and the same responsibilities, as all other pupils

- Home school liaison is central to the successful integration of overseas children into the school, and the school will be pro-active in promoting positive home school relations.

Whole School Measures to ensure successful integration of overseas pupils

Schools with an inclusive curriculum, which reflects and affirms diversity of culture, ethnicity and religion, will help to ensure that children from ethnic minorities feel valued and accepted. To promote appreciation of diversity, our school is committed to

- The delivery of an intercultural education to all pupils which is cross curricular, and which permeates the ethos of the school
- The provision of books that give a world view from a variety of perspectives and that portray characters from different ethnic backgrounds
- The provision of arts education experiences which reflects different experiences and cultures
- The effective delivery of the SPHE programme
- The affirmation of the languages and cultures which our overseas pupils bring with them
- The annual celebration of an intercultural day
- The school will make every effort to combat racism, and this will be underpinned by the schools Code of Behaviour
- The school will encourage overseas parents to become actively involved in Parents' Association activities.